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THE
HIGHLAND INN.



TROSACHS.

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&c. &c.

INTRODUCTION.

DUNCAN MAC ALPIN, M.D., of Bas Alpin, the writer of the Diary of which the following pages form a fragment, was the scion of an ancient and honourable Gaelic stock, claiming lineal descent from King Alpin*. Being a second son, he was destined to procure his livelihood by his own energies ; and, consequently, received a superior education to that which usually falls to the lot of the embryo chief of a Highland family. After completing his classical studies at the Mareschal College of Aberdeen, he re-

* Alpin was the sixty-eighth king of Scotland, in a direct line from Fergus the First. He ascended the throne in the year eight hundred and thirty-one, and reigned only seven years. George Buchanan, in right good latin, informs us that he was the son of Achaius ; and, after many battles with the Picts, he was slain, and his head cut off and stuck upon a pole ; and that the place where this happened was called, in Buchanan's time, *Bas Alpin*, that is, the death-place of Alpin. The antiquity of the Doctor's family is, therefore, undoubted.—EDITOR.

moved to the Metropolitan University—in
 homely language, the College of Edinburgh—
 where he acquired a sufficiency of medical
 lore to be dubbed a Doctor, and to enable him
 to hold the double commissions of assistant-
 surgeon and ensign in the forty-second regi-
 ment. But young Mac Alpin's mind, tinctured
 by romance and poetic imaginings, the growth
 of the mountain regions of his nativity, was ill
 adapted for the performance of his surgical avo-
 cations, for bandaging and amputating limbs ;
 he, therefore, soon exchanged the lancet for the
 sword, fought his way to a company, and, in due
 time, he might have commanded the regiment,
 had not the waywardness of his disposition
 changed again his destiny, and led him to re-
 sume his medical functions. He had, in the
 interval, made a voyage to America, where he
 was shipwrecked ; and on his return to Europe,
 meeting with disappointment in an attach-
 ment which he had long and devotedly fos-
 tered, and not finding his professional occupa-
 tions sufficient to withdraw his mind from dwell-
 ing upon this unfortunate event, the Doctor at-
 tempted to divert his melancholy by travelling.
 At Naples, tidings reached him that he was the
 head of his family ; his brother, the chief, having
 early finished his career by dint of indolence

and the power of whiskey ; and he was on the way to Bas Alpin, when the incidents that are related in the following fragment occurred.

Such is the brief account of his author which the Editor has thought necessary to lay before his readers. In executing the task devolved upon him by the will of the deceased, the Editor has felt, in its full force, the truth of the adage, “ that no duty is more irksome than arranging the papers of a deceased friend.” They consisted of a voluminous manuscript on Medicine, which was at once deposited in the hands of Messrs. Longman and Co., and which has since met the public eye in the shape of two goodly octavos ;—an endless collection of letters, that would have made three handsome quartos, in accordance with the custom of the present day, which leads Editors of posthumous works to sacrifice the reputation of their deceased friends to the debased appetite of the public for private gossip and scandal ;—a few unfinished fragments of poetry, that will rest quietly in the vault of the Capulets ;—the sketch of a rejected tragedy, which the author believed to be too classical to please the sophisticated taste of a modern audience ;—a plan for a History of Medicine, which the Editor laments his friend did not live

to execute ;—and the Diary, of which this volume is a fragment.

The Diary appears to have commenced at the time when the mind of the writer was suffering from the disappointment alluded to: it contained some curious and severe strictures on the character of the fair sex; their irresistible passion for wealth, equipage, and rank, and their inconstancy. The Editor attributes these strictures to the then state of the worthy Doctor's feelings, out of regard for which, and from his high veneration for the virtues of womankind, he has consigned them to the flames. His executor, Angus, or, as some moderns translate this ancient and honourable Gaelic discriminative, Æneas Mac Errie, Esq., Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh, would have destroyed the whole Diary, on the possibility of some of the remarks affording grounds for actions of libel: but the Editor argued the point with the learned writer, and, at length, dumb-founded him with the following quotation from our immortal Shakspeare:—

“ What woman in the city do I name,
When that I say the city woman bears
The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?
Who can come in and say that I mean her,
When such a one as she, such is her neighbour?

Or what is he, of basest function,
 That says his bravery is not on my cost,
 Thinking that I mean him—
 ————— how then? let me see wherein
 My tongue hath wrong'd him ; if it do him right,
 Then he hath wrong'd himself ; if he be free,
 Why then my taxing like a wild goose flies,
 Unclaim'd of any man."

Were the question asked why this portion of the Diary had been selected for publication, the Editor would reply, that it contains nothing personally offensive to any one ; that it displays a faithful description of a part of the Highlands much visited, but little known ; that the stories are calculated to please by their verisimilitude to nature ; and that the picture of his friend's habits and feelings, as drawn by himself, are honourable to human nature, displaying an unsophisticated character, and a mind, although eccentric, yet imbued with elevated moral feelings, and the highest principles of rectitude.

With regard to the arrangement of the materials of the Diary, the Editor has only to remark, that he has left it as he found it, with the exception of the division into chapters, and their mottoes, in conformity to the custom of modern novelists. To the mottoes, indeed, he has a partiality, having been once employed by a distinguished authoress to add his mite to the Treasury of Amusement, which she was about

to open to the public, by finding mottoes for her chapters; and the extraordinary popularity of this work, he has vanity enough to think, was, in some measure, due to the appropriateness of these chapteral decorations.

Such as this fragment is, the Editor offers it to the public. Like an exhibition of pictures, some of the sketches will please one taste, some another; and if it obtain the suffrages of one-half of its readers, he will rest contented; satisfied that the way to gratify all the world is to please one half of it.

Pennycuik, 10th October, 1835.

CHAPTER I.

“ ——— subject to a critick’s marginall.”

RETURNE FROM PARNASSUS.

THE DOCTOR’S JOURNAL.

I HAD passed Loch Achray without seeing one of the numerous beauties of that romantic lake; for the rain, which had fallen in torrents, from the moment that my eye caught the first glimpse of Loch Venachar, was accompanied with an impenetrable cloud, shrouding the whole scene. It had just begun to ascend on the base of Ben Venue, and, like the rising of the curtain in a drama, was displaying the Tro-sachs, tinted by the mellow rays of the setting sun, whose broad disk, although still visible, yet, was beginning to dip behind the summit of the mountain. While I surveyed, with mute ecstasy, this scene, my servant, Dugald Macnab, rode close up to me, and touching, respectfully, my shoulder with the but-end of his whip, informed me that we were arrived at Ardken-okrochan, Stewart’s Inn. This communication disturbed a train of pleasing reflections, into

which the prospect now opening before me had led my imagination ; but as I was desirous of pursuing my musings, I dismounted with as little consciousness of the effort as possible, and was standing, with my chin resting between the thumb and the fore-finger of my right hand, gazing upon a magnificent rainbow, formed in the last partial droppings of the dispersing cloud, when the salutation—"Hah! is it possible?—can it be the Doctor?—By Gad, it is! Hah! Dr. Mac Alpin, is this you?" completely dissolved my reverie. On turning round to observe who thus accosted me, I was surprised, and certainly not displeased, to behold my old friend Colonel Standard, from whom I had parted, on the Bluff of Savannah, in North America, in the year 1805.

The workings of Time in the figure and on the physiognomy of my friend were sufficient to have disguised him from my recollection ; and, but for the upright, starched air of the old soldier, and two or three characteristic traces that no revolution of years could obliterate, I should not have recognized the man to whose kindness I had been deeply indebted, when thrown by shipwreck upon the coast of Georgia, in the *fifth* year of the present century.

The Colonel, as he now stood before me, was

on the wrong side of seventy : he was a lank, raw-boned figure, nearly seven feet in height, with a large aquiline nose, deep-sunk penetrating hazel eyes, shaded with large, shaggy, well-arched eyebrows, a fine elevated forehead, and a mouth of ample capacity ; a slight projection of the under-lip of which, and the downward inclination of its angles when the lips were compressed, gave an air of stern intelligence to his countenance, that at once bespoke the profession and the intellectual character of the man. He was dressed in a single-breasted blue coat, with a red collar and cuffs ; a white keysermere waistcoat, with flap pockets, and breeches of the same material ; well-blackened hussar boots, and a cocked hat, mounted with a black cockade and a gold loop. The few grey hairs that marked the outline of his temples and forehead were combed carefully backwards ; for his hat was raised in his left hand, while he held out his right to receive mine ; and the tuft which time had spared on the back of his head was formed into a slender cue, terminated with a curl, that reached at least ten inches below his shoulders. To complete the picture, he carried an umbrella under his arm, and one of his gloves dangled, in mili-

tary fashion, from the wrist of his bared hand.

“It is indeed you,” said he, as he grasped my hand with an energy which indicated no failure of his muscular powers—“I could not be mistaken; although, by Gad! there is some change in the symmetry of the handsome young man who parted from me on the Bluff. Let me see:—’tis twenty-three years ago—heh! Doctor?—yes, it must be twenty-three:—the battle of Alexandria—aye! aye! it was the second year after that affair:—just two years after my old campaigning comrade Abercrombie fought that battle. My Letitia”—Here the veteran paused, and, casting around his eyes, continued:

“I see none of the women folks near:—well, you may recollect my Letitia was only six weeks old: and my poor wife, who had suffered in her confinement, was beginning to crawl out to breathe the air of that cursed climate—for I must call it so, although it was the place of her nativity.”

“I remember it well,” replied I.

“Yes,” said he—“if you recollect, we had just finished a decanter of Sangaree, under the Tamarind tree, opposite to my house on the

Bluff, when the boatmen hailed ; and the firm, farewell-shake you then gave me thrills in my hand even now :—no shame, Doctor ; all the mother was in your eyes :—it was the utterance of friendship and gratitude, for your heart was on your lips.”—

The quivering of the old Colonel’s lip, and a slight faltering in his utterance, plainly told me that, whatever the lapse of years had effected in his exterior, the bosom of my friend was unchanged. I returned the pressure of his hand with all the warmth of my nature, for my feelings were too much overpowered to permit me to reply to him in words ; and a thousand reminiscences of events that had passed away since the period of which he spoke rushed upon my mind.

The beam of hope which then, in spite of the shipwreck that I had suffered, gilded every prospective scene, had been extinguished in the gloomy clouds of disappointment. Many of those with whom I had set out in life had distanced me in the career of ambition ; many, who held the warmest place in my affections, were no more ; one, whose image was the only idol my heart had ever worshipped, whose smile was to me like the promise of Heaven, whose words fell upon my ear like the accents

my bed-room, and was in the act of airing my linen when I opened the door of the apartment.

“ You will excuse me, sir,” said he, raising himself as erect as his lame knee would permit, and placing the back of his hand on his forehead : “ how could you stand sae lang wi that wat cloak upon your shoulders? Do ye nae mind the fever and ague ye got in the laigh countries, frae standing wi wat shoon on, to look at a mountebank?—Troth! ’tis miraculous that the rhumatics, that kept you without wink o’ sleep last night, are sae soon forgotten.”

I acknowledged my error, and took the kind reproof as it was intended, expressing my satisfaction at the comfortable aspect of my apartment.

“ Aye,” said Dugald, again touching his forehead, “ I chose it because it has nae draughts ; and, too, because it is within the sough of the linn ahint the house ; for I ken weel your honour’s melancholy turn, and the liking ye have to sic half-smothered din, when there is ne’er a mouse stirring at midnight ; and—”

“ And what, Dugald ?” said I, as he stopped short in the details of his reasons.

“ Only a Hielandman’s haverills ;—’tis an auld story of the Each-Uisk snorting on the

north bank o' the stream, that came into my head."

I smiled at Dugald's reason for the choice of my chamber, although I could have readily dispensed with its situation within the sound of the waterfall, at the back of the inn; especially as this was now increased by the late rains, and its monotonous rumbling, softened only by the interposition of the walls, was quite perceptible.

"But, what is the Each-Uisk, Dugald?" said I, wishing to hear an uneducated Highlander's explanation of the superstition to which it alluded, and which I had almost forgotten.

"What should it be," replied the honest Gael, apparently surprised at my question, "but the Water-Elf? Is your honour a child o' the mist, and no ken the Each-Uisk? What is it but the Elf-Horse wha stands ready saddled and bridled near the torrent, at the dead o' the night, to tempt the wayfaring man to mount her; when, galloping down the Trosachs, she plunges into the Loch, and the rider is never heard o' mair. She can be laid only when pierced wi silver shot; but few try the experiment, though I ken'd a man who loaded his piece wi sax-pences, and lay in wait a week o' nights for her on the side o' Lock Lubnaig, where he had lost many a sheep."

I was astonished at the strong hold which early impressed superstitions take upon the imagination, and which even make cowards of men who are otherwise bold and daring. Such was the case of honest Dugald, who had been long enough absent from his native glen to have obliterated less deeply rooted prejudices; his courage had been tried, and found efficient on several occasions; but he would sooner have marched up to a cannon's mouth, than have walked down the Trosachs after night-fall. I attempted to lead him by argument into the regions of truth and good sense; but the respectful assent, "It may be sae, sir!" which he slowly articulated, as he gave the last touch to the velvet collar of my new coat, convinced me that it is only necessary to return to this land of shadows, glens, torrents, mists, and rainbows, to awaken again, in all their primæval vividness of colouring, those superstitions that the hand of tradition traces on the juvenile imagination of the Highlander.

As I have not yet given the pedigree of Dugald Macnab a place in my Diary, I shall now, for the benefit of those into whose hands these valuable papers may fall, when I shall be gathered to my fathers, here state, that this most faithful of servants was the eleventh son of a

small tenant of my grandfather, one of the last of those who held lands "in steelbow," a species of tenure now extinct. With very little education, except that imitative culture of the active faculties by which he was enabled to climb rocks, to swim across lakes and rivers, to spear a salmon by torch-light, run down a deer, and to convert its haunches into venison hams, Dugald attained his eighteenth year, when, becoming tired of these occasional exertions, and of his more monotonous and daily occupation of herding cattle on the wastes, and fired with military ardour, he "left his father's house," and, trudging to Perth, enlisted into the forty-second regiment. In this school of heroism, Dugald continued for twelve years, sharing the glory of every service in which the regiment was engaged, until he received a musket ball through his knee at the affair of Badajoz, and was invalided. I was then surgeon of the regiment, and, knowing the excellent disposition of Dugald, who was universally respected in the corps, I hired him as a servant. In sketching the portrait of Dugald Macnab, I may liken him to the gnarled trunk of a mountain oak,—a thick-set, rugged Gael, with strongly marked features, high cheek-bones, small grey eyes, a turned-up nose, and sand-coloured, crisp,

curling locks, which harmonized with the deep vermilion of his complexion. The halt in his pace, which his wound caused, has produced a habit of screwing up his mouth, when he advances his disabled limb,—a gesture not favourable to his beauty: but Dugald, like some other productions of Nature, is not to be estimated by his exterior; for under this unprepossessing aspect he conceals one of the tenderest and most affectionate hearts that ever beat in mortal bosom. Wherever accident led us, in our peregrinations, to sojourn for a few days, the rude Celt became the centre of attraction; mothers left their infants in his arms, and the children of both sexes hovered in crowds around him: his gentle and affectionate manners recommended him to the former, while his hilarity and unalterable good temper were irresistible attractions to all those guileless hearts to whom amusement was the business of life, and suspicion and reserve were, as yet, utter strangers. When labouring under a dangerous disease in Paris, augmented by the treachery of pretended friendship and the falsehood of women, which had severed every tie that could reconcile me to the world, and I sought for death, the kind-hearted Dugald never left my room, but, equally regardless of the contagion of

the malady which threatened my dissolution, and of the calls of exhausted nature for repose, tended my couch day and night. When delirium further deprived me of the power of managing my pecuniary matters, his delicacy, which would not permit him to touch my purse, led him to supply my necessities from his own little store ; and instead of leaving me to my fate, and benefiting by my fall amongst strangers, when reason returned and convalescence was approaching, he carried me in his arms from my bed to my sofa ; and as my limbs began to renew their office, like a nurse over a child, he upheld my tottering steps among the groves of Chantilly, whither I had been ordered by my physician, to inhale new vigour from the balmy breezes of that salubrious and delightful residence. Such is Dugald Macnab—to him, indeed, may be justly applied the character of another faithful domestic, in the language of our immortal dramatist:—

“ ——— good old man, how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world ;
When service sweat for duty, not for meed !
Thou art not of the fashion of these times.” *

If I live to carry his head to the grave, I shall plant a wild brier on the sod, as an emblem of

* *As You like it.*—Act II. Scene III.

that sweetness which owed nothing to cultivation, but which exhaled its fragrance, and blossomed kindly, beneath the chilling blasts of poverty and the blighting breath of misfortune.

CHAPTER II.

“ ——— to persevere

In obstinate condolment, is a course
Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief :
It shows a will most incorrect to Heaven ;
A heart unfortified, or mind impatient ;
An understanding simple and unschool'd.”

HAMLET.

ON descending into the little parlour of the inn, I found the veteran occupying two chairs, one as a seat and the other as a footstool. He rose, however, as I entered the room, and taking me by the hand, politely led me to Mrs. Standard, who was seated by the fire, and who instantly recognized me as an old acquaintance ; then turning round to another lady, who stood on the opposite side, he introduced me to her with all the formality of the old school.

“ Doctor ! Miss Bridget Standard, my maiden sister ;—Bridget ! my respected friend, Doctor Mac Alpin.”

Mrs. Standard, twenty-three years ago, was a pretty little woman, with fair auburn tresses, and regular but expressive features, of a lively

disposition, witty, and very fond of admiration. Even at that period, however, when she was only twenty-six years of age, as is not uncommon with her countrywomen (she was a native of South Carolina), the rose that blushed on her virgin cheek had begun to fade ; and now, although she could not be regarded as an old woman, yet, from the shrinking of her features and the sallowness of her complexion, she had the appearance of being, at the least, ten years older than was actually the case. Her voice, too, which was once melodious, and remarkable for such variety of modulation as threw a charm over every sentiment she uttered, was reduced to a monotonous treble, which gave to her remarks, even when they were intended to be most kind, an air of reproof and harshness ; and, to what was meant for mere repartee, the semblance of biting satire. She still, however, exhibited the same neatness in dress that distinguished her when a young woman ; her bonnet, which she continued to wear within doors, although this fashion has been long since discontinued, was as appropriate, and her plain brown lustring fitted as closely to her small symmetrical figure, as when she shone forth, the envy of the one sex and the admiration of the other, in Savannah. Her hand, on the form

and, size of which she always prided herself, was decorated with a brilliant and several other rings, and her black morocco shoe was fixed with the same gold buckle that was displayed on her foot twenty-five years ago.

I had never before seen Miss Bridget Standard. She was considerably above the ordinary stature of her sex ; and her features, which were large, were rendered more marked by the leanness of her whole frame, which for extenuation might have been regarded as totally devoid of radical moisture, or a specimen of a living mummy. In speaking of a maiden lady, I dare not venture to hint how the vermilion of fifteen had become fixed upon such a cheek ; or how the pure ivory of the teeth peered between lips not a line in thickness ; or how the dark locks, that hung in ringlets round her angular visage, had retained their jet beneath the frost of sixty winters, especially as her eyebrows, which shaded eyes of the same hue as her brother's, and which had modestly retired into their sockets, seemed to have caught some of the snows that had fallen in that period. Her voice was the soprano of Mrs. Standard's treble ; and, although seldom exerted when her brother was present, yet, as I afterwards

learned, it was occasionally heard, not in the most perfect harmony with that of her sister-in-law. Miss Bridget received my bow of salutation with a very formal courtesy; an oblique throwing back of the head, with a slight closing of the left eye and a compressed pursing of the lips, which swelled the wasted buccinators almost to a smile; and was intended as expressive of the most gracious reception of her brother's friend.

"Biddy," enquired the veteran, "what are the girls so long about?"

"My dear Augustus," replied Miss Bridget, giving him a look which was meant as a reproof for putting such a question before a stranger, "you know that they were nearly drowned in that odious shower; and it is natural for young people to spend a little time at the toilet. If I had ventured to the Loch in spite of certain warnings of my corns, I could not have been dressed so soon, brother." And, casting a sideling glance into a looking glass, which hung on the opposite wall of the room, she adjusted a pink gauze scarf over her collar bones; for, consistently with the fidelity of a true chronicler, I cannot employ the word bosom.

"If the shower had fallen thirty years ago,"

said Mrs. Standard, in an undertone, as if thinking aloud, and without raising her eyes from the fire, into which she was gazing—”

“Humph,” said the Colonel; while Miss Bridget, affecting not to hear the remark, walked slowly to the window, humming the tune of an old ballad—a custom which many persons adopt to lull the rising fiend of recrimination.

“If the girls have taken cold, and should they suffer from this drenching,” said Mrs. Standard, “the blame shall be at your door, Doctor! for ever since you described the Highlands to the Colonel, in such overstrained, romantic language, when you were our inmate in Savannah, he has done nothing but talk of the anticipated pleasures of this tour; and a pretty business we have made of it.”

The old Colonel rose leisurely, with a dignified air, from his chair, for he had resumed his lounging position; and, taking two strides towards the middle of the room, finished a pinch of Macaba, which he held betwixt his thumb and two fore-fingers. I was amused at the alacrity with which Miss Bridget turned round, as she observed this preparation for a matrimonial skirmish, and with her look of exultation in the revenge that she now antici-

pated for the covert arrow which Mrs. Standard had aimed at her.

“My dear,” said the Colonel, approaching his wife, “have I not often told you that the narrow, calculating notions of your Trans-Atlantic education”—he would have proceeded, but, at this moment, the door opened, and the daughter and niece of my friend entered.

The appearance of the young ladies produced an almost electrical effect on the temper of all the party. Like the landscape suddenly illuminated by the sun bursting through a lowering sky, a smile of pleasure overspread the countenances of both parents; even the parched inflexibility of Miss Bridget’s features relaxed to something expressive of placid satisfaction. The veteran introduced me to his daughter as an old and valued friend; and, having returned her graceful courtesy with my best bow, I soon found that my name was not only familiar to her ear, but that the kind manner in which her father had often spoken of me, had made an impression highly favourable towards me, and prepared a welcome which accident now enabled her to realize.

Miss Standard was tall, handsome, and in

features a softened resemblance of her father ; yet there was something so beautiful and attractive in her smile, that everything like restraint instantly vanished before its radiance ; whilst, at the same time, none who saw her could fail to expect, in her remarks and conversation, something indicative of more than ordinary judgment and understanding. Her eyes were dark, and softened by the shade of long, black silken eye-lashes : there was little colour on her cheek, but its absence harmonized well with her placid features : and a fine expanded forehead, on each side of which her black hair lay in simple braids, conferred an expression to her face at once dignified and mild. She might have sat for the portrait of a Madonna ; or as Tragedy in her most engaging mien.

Caroline Ashton, the niece of Mrs. Standard, reminded me of one whom I would willingly forget. She was a head shorter than her cousin : her figure was symmetrical, light, and elegant—a fairy frame : she was fair, with an oval, well-proportioned face, encircled with a profusion of auburn ringlets. The bloom of health spread upon her cheek was heightened by a constant play of lively expression, which

ever varied her laughing features, and beamed in every glance of a full blue eye,

“ As heaven’s unclouded radiance clear. • ”

She was evidently a great favorite with her aunt, whose look, in gazing upon her, bespoke the secret pleasure with which she beheld the ripening charms of the animated girl ; for she was still entitled to this appellation, being only in her seventeenth year, that most interesting period in the life of woman, breathing of innocence and love, when, like the spring of Nature, all is full of promise, and the blush of every unfolding bud is deepened by the beauty with which imagination paints its anticipated maturity.

My eyes were riveted upon the lovely girl ; her form, her look, the fascination of her smile, the playful liveliness of her manner, the musical tones of her voice, were the exact similitude of one in whom once rested my destiny : a thousand events—many sunny hours—the retrospect of which appear like a fairy dream which has vanished in the gloomy reality of a day of wretchedness—rushed upon my memory. The question, who is she ? presented itself

every moment, and numerous conjectures, the most improbable, thrust themselves upon my imagination in reply, and determined me to secure the first opportunity of resolving the mystery—for such it seemed to me—that could produce an identity of person and manner, where no relationship existed.

“ I hope, Caroline,” said Mrs. Standard, “ your feet are not very wet ? ”

“ How could they be otherwise, my dear Aunt, unless I had borrowed a pair of the guide’s shoes, which were perforated with holes, to keep, as he told me, the feet dry, by permitting the water to run out of them as fast as it entered ? ”

This description afforded Mrs. Standard an opportunity of remarking, “ that she was surprised to hear of so ingenious a contrivance among such a savage race.”

“ And had you no shelter during the full pelting of the shower ? ” again eagerly enquired Mrs. Standard ; and, without waiting for a reply, turning round to the Colonel, she remarked that it was in vain to expect anything like rational weather in that deplorable country : that if they did not lose their daughter and niece by the repeated drenchings that they must sustain, she could not survive it ; and if she

must die, she implored that he would, at least, take her where she could be buried like a Christian, and have the benefit of the church service.

“ We had, indeed, quite a treat,” said Caroline, anxious to avert the sparring which she foresaw would follow this remark ; “ we got into Fair Ellen’s bower, and had a specimen of Mr. Oatland’s oratory.”

Mrs. Standard’s lip slightly curled into a sarcastic smile, as the word bower was uttered.

“ Bower ! indeed,” said she ; “ for my part, I am nauseated with these Highland bowers !”

The old Colonel could no longer resist the pleasure of returning the fire of this attack, and dryly remarked—

“ Yes, my dear ; but you had taste enough to be delighted with Ossian’s Hall, at Dunkeld, which, to be sure, has somewhat of the air of the metropolis in it, and is almost as interesting as the submarine palace in the last Christmas pantomime.”

Miss Standard, who, not less than her cousin, trembled lest this conjugal sparring should proceed farther before a stranger, now interposed—

“ I could not have believed,” said she, “ that the Advocate, with his drollery and affection

for high jinks, as he terms the pranks with which he amuses us, possessed so much fine taste and sentiment. He recited several passages from the *Lady of the Lake* with a degree of feeling and pathos which was truly delightful."

Miss Bridget left the window and joined the circle round the fire.

"Yes, Aunt Bridget," said Caroline, "I rejoiced that you were not of the party; for, considering that he is a married man, he has already made too deep an impression upon your heart."

Miss Bridget drew herself up, pursed her thin lips, and, casting a glance towards the looking glass, replied—

"My dear Caroline, how can you be so cruel as to make me the object of your jests? You know that any regard I have for Mr. Oatland, arises from his polite attentions to a deserted old maid, whom nobody else condescends to notice."

Mrs. Standard threw a significant glance at Caroline.

"Never mind, Biddy!" said the Colonel, for he knew it was a sore subject; "never mind."

However, the conversation was here inter-

rupted, for the dinner was now brought in. The four gentlemen of whom my friend had spoken entered the room ; and to each I was severally introduced. The party consisted of Mr. Oatland, a Scotch barrister ; Mr. Frederick Mordaunt, an English clergyman ; Mr. Sketchly, an amateur artist ; and a young Cantab, Mr. Percival, who had come from Cambridge to ransack the cryptogamic treasures of Ben Lawers ; and whose phrenological ardour would have led him to measure almost every cranium in each step of his progress.

During dinner, the Cantab, who filled a chair next to the Colonel, fixing his eyes upon the head of Dugald, who had just entered to assist, in waiting, the Colonel's servant and Peggy, a smart Highland lass, who officiated in the double capacity of waiter and chambermaid. Having finished his observations, he whispered to the veteran—

“ I see something peculiar in that fellow's head.”

“ Yes,” replied the old gentleman, “ he has the sandy crisp locks which I have observed to be peculiar to the lower order of Highlanders.”

“ Nay,” continued the Cantab ; “ he has

the organ of covetousness and that of murder strongly developed ; I should not like to meet him alone in Glenco."

The Colonel's attention was otherwise engaged, and the remark passed unnoticed.

"How is this, Peggy?" said he, as the girl placed a brace of grouse on the table, "I thought your mistress said there was no game to be got at Ardkenokrochan."

"I dinnà ken, sir!" was the reply ; "they came into the house just afore dinner."

The old gentleman looked astonishment ; Mr. Oatland smiled.

"Colonel," said he, "you may depend upon the girl's veracity : you have yet to learn the aptitude of this species of game for motion : they came in most opportunely ; and sometimes, also, they walk off from mere spite at being too long kept from the spit. Shall I take the liberty of carving them ?—Miss Bridget, permit me to offer you this backbone."

The Cantab, who had turned his eyes from the head of Dugald upon the fine elevated forehead of the Advocate, now remarked that nothing surprised him more than the ready wit of Mr. Oatland, seeing that the organ of comparison in him was so feebly developed.

"My wit, Mr. Percival," said the lawyer,

“ lies deep ; but, like the latent heat of the chemists, it is sometimes made sensible by collision with opposite materials.”

The Cantab bit his lips.

“ I never doubted,” said he, “ the existence of talent ; but as your baldness enables the organs to be easily traced, I only wondered, and must acknowledge, that it is an exception to the general rule, to observe comparison so little prominent in your cranium.”

The Advocate bowed, and begged that Mr. Percival would not permit the confidence which he reposed in craniology to be shaken by any thing in so eccentric a head as his.

The Cantab continued pertinaciously to defend the truth of phrenology, offering to tell the capacity of every person present who would submit to the examination of head which he required. This proposal was not, however, accepted ; and, when the servants left the room, I took the opportunity of informing the learned Craniologist how egregiously he was mistaken in the character of Dugald, who was the least covetous and the kindest hearted of human beings.

“ Education, Doctor, may have counteracted his natural propensities,” was the reply .

“ Ah, hah !” exclaimed the Colonel, “ I per-

ceive that, after all, you may fashion a man as you please, in spite of either physiognomy or phrenology. I always thought so :—give me a good schoolmaster, or a smart drill-serjeant for a recruit, and I will turn you out a clever scholar, or as steady a soldier as ever shouldered a firelock, whatever may be the bumps and the irregularities of the caput. What do you think, Mr. Mordaunt ?”

The clergyman, who was deeply engaged in a conversation with Caroline Ashton on the influence of poetry on the morals of society, and only heard the question without its prelude, looked up and replied :—

“ I think, Colonel, that although there are exceptions, yet its general tendency has been to nurture immorality.”

‘The Cantab seemed amazed.

“ As to the immorality,” said the veteran, “ I cannot perceive how it can affect morals, either one way or the other. It is true that it has been said to afford arguments for materialism.”

Mr. Mordaunt looked as much astonished as the Cantab.

“ Materialism !” replied he, echoing the term—“ materialism !—how can it possibly afford arguments for materialism ? It is more

likely to cause murder ; and, indeed, with due submission to the profession, Colonel, I am of opinion that, except for the immortalization of heroes by poets, war would long since have ceased to be the scourge of humanity."

Mr. Oatland smiled.

"The poets may have had some influence," said the veteran, not discovering that he and Mr. Mordaunt were at cross purposes ; "but, in making this admission, you must relinquish the agency of bumps."

The Clergyman appeared still more astonished.

"By no means," exclaimed the Cantab ; who, though he was not aware of the drift of Mr. Mordaunt's remark, yet felt that the Colonel had attacked phrenology. "It does not follow :—the organ of ambition, which may be as largely developed in the poet as in the hero, is variously influenced and modified in its action by other organs, and both characters are stimulated to seek the bubble reputation, although by different means :—it must be allowed that the numbers of the poet, which rouse the energies of the hero, would fall unheeded upon the ear of one devoid of military ambition."

Mr. Mordaunt, who now discovered that he and Colonel Standard were talking of very

different subjects, laughed heartily at the mistake.

Miss Standard, who had been listening with attention, remarked that “ she could not avoid saying, that, ignorant as she acknowledged herself to be of the principles of phrenology, she thought, that even were these correct, the science was one with which she would never desire to become acquainted : for, as much gratification arose from the contemplation of circumstances unfolding the characters of individuals often directly opposed to our anticipations, one source of pleasure would be lost were we capable of tracing character, at first sight, on the contour of the head.”

Mr. Sketchly, who had hitherto remained silent, now also attacked the Cantab.

“ Miss Standard,” said he, “ is undoubtedly correct: much of our gratification is derived from unexpected results:—thus, if, in turning the corner of a rock, on leaving a rugged and dreary glen, our eye suddenly fall upon a rich and cultivated strath, the pleasure which this scene affords us is less derived from the picture itself than from the unlooked-for change of scenery.”

Mr. Percival replied by remarking that, “ however true this might hold with regard to

the picturesque, yet, in mind and morals, truth was the great object ; and if phrenology could discover a rogue beneath the cloak of hypocrisy, the advantage thus derived from its aid would greatly overcome the loss of such a gratification as that to which Miss Standard alluded.”

The Colonel, who was leaning upon the table, and twirling his glass during this conversation, now put on his spectacles, and, propping himself upright in his chair, turned his eyes directly upon the Cantab, and thus addressed him :—

“ Mr. Percival ; my dear sir, let me tell you—a scholar and a man of science, that you are still young in the knowledge of the world ; and, therefore, permit an old fellow, who has grown grey in the study of it, to give you a little useful information. You are right, sir, in saying that truth is the object most worthy of research—‘ querere verum in Sylvas Academi’—I think that’s the phrase in Horace.” The Cantab nodded assent. “ Well, sir, it is certainly the best and most becoming object of research : but if you hope to acquire it, as far as human character is concerned, solely by the aid of phrenology, or of any other science, by Gad, sir ! let me tell you that you will find your expectations most woe-

fully disappointed. This is no *façon de parler* ; but an opinion spoken, by Gad ! in sober earnest."

" Do you mean to maintain, Colonel," said the Cantab, " that the propensities of man do not depend on physical structure, but are created solely by circumstances ?"

" I know nothing of the physical structure of the brain," replied the veteran ; " but I know the influence of circumstances. Although Mr. Mordaunt be present, yet I must quote a passage of Scripture, which you cannot fail to recollect, in proof of this remark. —' Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing ?'—was the reply of Shimei to the prophet, who foretold his cruelty as a conqueror. Shimei had never displayed any propensity that could indicate the conduct which he afterwards pursued, and which was evidently born with the occasion—yes, sir, born with the occasion : and many a man, by Gad ! would pass the muster of life, and perform his duty with honour and credit, but for some cursed circumstance or other crossing his line of march. I have known men, who would have wept over the death of a sparrow, plunge a bayonet into the bosom of a helpless female in the sacking of a town : and many a natu-

rally honest man has been driven by distress, or allured by temptation, to commit acts which have brought him to an untimely end. What influence, sir, had the organs of these men over the circumstances that impelled them into the current of infamy? Where were those of murder and covetousness before these impulses occurred?"

"The organs were called into activity by these circumstances," said Mr. Percival.

"By Gad! Mr. Percival," was the reply, "it is well for the best of us, that phrenology cannot perform what it pretends to: we should cut a sorry figure, indeed, were every man's motives of action chalked out upon his forehead: and many a hole would be found in uniforms that now appear whole and unspotted. It is sufficient, my young friend," continued the veteran, softening his tone, "that our derilections are exposed to one eye; from which indeed they cannot be hidden, and under whose inspection they must appear in all their deformity, in that great muster to which the human race shall be one day called; and I may venture to say, that, with all the integrity of the Judge who shall pass sentence upon us, there will be more lenity on that occasion, than would be displayed by erring man to his fellow, had each of us a

window in our breasts, through which our motives and feelings might be viewed. Yes, Mr. Percival, it is enough that we answer for our conduct to the Great General of our salvation ; and, I trust," said he, rising up, and taking the Cantab kindly by the hand, " I trust to find you, my young friend, on that day of universal inspection, not the worse for a little advice from an old soldier—to think every man honest until you find him out to be a rogue, whatever may be the shape of his head."

The Cantab, who felt the kindly-meant reproof of the veteran, as it was intended, bowed ; and a pause in the conversation following this address, Mrs. Standard nodded to Miss Bridget ; and the ladies, rising, left the room.

The Colonel having rung for fresh peats and a billet of wood for the fire ; and, at the suggestion of Mr. Oatland, having ordered tumblers, hot water, and a bottle of Glenleevit to be placed on the table, instead of another bottle of port ; and, having lighted his cigar, we drew our chairs towards the fire. The lecture on phrenology, however, had produced feelings of seriousness which were not favourable to conversation ; it therefore flagged ; and as the ladies had no drawing-room to retire to, they were heard chatting on the little esplanade in the

front of the inn. Mr. Mordaunt and his friends successively left the room to join them, leaving the veteran and myself seated on each side of the fire. The old gentleman replenished his tumbler and stirred the fire ; and, having lighted a fresh cigar, and reclined backward in his chair, as if to indulge in a reverie, I rose and walked to the window.

It was a beautiful night: a thousand stars spangled the deep vault of the sky ; and the full moon, which hung suspended in it, was reflected in a stream of dazzling lustre from the unruffled bosom of Loch Achray, while her soft beams, " sleeping upon the banks," obscurely illuminated with silvery light the face of Ben Venue, and the projecting rocks and tufted knolls of the Trosachs, throwing the huge shoulder of the mountain and every hollow into the deepest shade. The stillness which settled upon the scene, although in some degree broken by the dull, monotonous sound of the waterfall at the back of the inn, the voices of the party on the little esplanade before it, and the occasional lowing of distant cattle, yet, produced a powerful feeling of solitude, whilst, at the same time, the mind was impressed with an idea of extension and space, which I have often experienced from moonlight scenery,

without being able to explain it. I was reflecting whether it might not be attributed to the deep shadows diminishing the apparent height of objects, combined with the obscurity which blends every thing in the distance into one hazy mass, the outline of which, marked upon the horizon, leads the imagination far beyond the visual boundary of the landscape? I was weighing these opinions in my mind, when the Colonel, taking his cigar from his mouth, and turning half round in his seat, addressed me.

“ Doctor,” said he, “ it is many years, my worthy fellow ! since we last met ; and as we may not have such an opportunity again, I will take advantage of the absence of our friends, to give you a little sketch of the good and the bad—and, by Gad ! there has been enough of the latter—which have befallen me since we parted.”

I resumed my chair. The veteran threw his cigar into the fire ; and, having placed his handkerchief on one knee, and crossed the other over it, so as to form a rest for his hands, which were clasped in one another, and with a slight inclination of the body forwards, he thus began. But, before stating what my friend said, I cannot avoid inditing a few sentences in

admiration of the attitude for narration which he thus chose. It is one which completely relieves the mind from any effort to maintain the action of the muscles that support the perpendicularity of the trunk of the body : for, by the rest given to the hands and arms, the body bends gently forwards, and every muscle is left in complete repose. No position, therefore, can be more favorable for delivering a narrative ; the mind is left unoccupied with any extraneous matter ; it is fully collected within itself, and kept steady to its object ; past events are readily recalled by the slightest efforts of recollection, and the current of the details flows free and undisturbed.

CHAPTER III.

Remembrance

Puts forth her light, that, like the eternal lamps
Of tombs, burns only to illuminate
Sepulchral gloom.—————

————— Yet, I bear
Within me warm and urgent thanksgivings
For the gifts left me.

ANON. See notes on *Philip Van Artervelde*.

THE old Colonel, seated as described, twice essayed to commence his narrative, but paused, as if some reminiscences that the effort had awakened stifled his voice: at length, after a struggle with his feelings, he thus began:—

“ Doctor! you may recollect that, a few weeks before you left Savannah, my father-in-law died; and, as this happened during my wife’s confinement on the birth of her first child, the event protracted her recovery: she was just beginning to get about again at the time you sailed. The necessity of looking after the plantation which fell into my hands on the death of the old gentleman—you did not

know him, I believe?—he was a very odd fish ; and although a staunch lover of the bottle, and one who never flinched while another man could keep his seat at table, yet, by Gad ! he was never overtaken but once, and that happened at the mess-table of a Yankee regiment, when he was eighty-five, a few months before his death : indeed, it brought on the complaint that terminated his career. But I am wandering from my story. What was I saying?—Aye—I recollect.

“ The necessity of looking after the property, and the natural wish of my wife to remain in the place of her nativity, induced me to stay six years longer in Savannah ; although I hated the place, and its aguish climate did not accord with my constitution. During this time my son was born ; and things rolled on merrily enough, until the yellow fever broke out and nearly depopulated the town. By the blessing of Providence, my family escaped the contagion of disease.”

I could not avoid here interrupting the worthy veteran, in order to set him right on the subject and nature of yellow fever, which is merely endemic, and neither contagious nor infectious.

“ Well,” continued he, “ I dare say you are

right; but we thought it contagious; and how could we think otherwise, when some houses were exempt from its influence, and others were swept utterly away by it? But I cannot argue the point with you.

“The distress which surrounded us, and the dread of a visitation from the fever, obliged me to dispose of the plantation, much under its value, and to evacuate the place. We intended to take refuge in New York; but the disease had gained a march upon us and entrenched itself there. Scarcely had we landed ere our ears were assailed with the tolling of the passing bell: nothing was seen in the streets but coffins and funerals; the air bore only sounds of lamentation; the stores and the shops were shut up; and, if you entered a house, you found that it was either deserted by the family, or you saw it, like an hospital, containing patients in every stage of the disease—some dying, some dead—and others, whose sallow countenances displayed that they had not escaped the tainting breath of the malady, were looking on with a kind of stupid apathy, as if heedless of the fate which threatened soon to overtake themselves.

“The first house at which I ventured to call, was that of Mr. Grant, a respectable merchant, whom I had frequently met with at the

table of my father-in-law. The door was opened by a black fellow, who answered my enquiry, whether his master was at home? by saying, ‘ Massa is sick at heart, and cannot be seen.’ Guessing, however, at the cause, and thinking that I might be serviceable, I urged my entreaty to see his master. The negro was inflexible: ‘ Massa sick—no see any one,’ was the only reply I could obtain; until, my pertinacity tiring out his patience, he at length agreed to request permission to admit me. Afraid to lose my object from the stupidity of the slave, for he was one, in that boasted land of freedom, I followed him into the parlour. I found Mr. Grant, in deep distress, seated at a table covered with letters, his forehead resting upon his hand, and an infant, about three years of age, upon his knee. He stretched out his hand, and recognized me without altering his position. ‘ Can I be of any service to you, my dear sir?’ said I, on taking his hand.

“ ‘ Alas!’ he replied, with a voice expressive of the deepest anguish, ‘ nothing can serve me now. This is a house, Colonel Standard, borne down with wretchedness: in one week, I have been bereaved of two of my children; and within this hour——’ here his voice faltered, and he struggled with his feelings—

‘ they have been followed by their mother.’ The infant, who was looking wistfully in his face, on my entrance, had now raised himself upon his father’s knee, and, putting one arm round the neck of his parent, whilst he applied his little lips to the moistened cheek, down which the tears were silently coursing one another, said, softly, ‘ Dear Papa!’ The expression overpowered the unfortunate man: he pressed the child to his bosom, and wept aloud. The scene was too much for me; and, finding that my feelings were scarcely under control, I squeezed his hand and left the house. In twelve days afterwards, this little boy was the only surviving representative of a family which had been in the full enjoyment of health and prosperity not a month before my arrival in New York.

“ Thank Heaven! we were soon enabled to leave this melancholy scene; and I landed in England, with my family, in the autumn of the same year.

“ Our party was here increased by a daughter of an unfortunate and profligate relation of my wife, that beautiful girl, Caroline, whom you have seen.”

“ She is indeed a beautiful young woman,” said I.

“Not more beautiful than good,” replied the Colonel. “Her story is a singular one; but you shall hear it at another time.

“Not to tire you, Doctor, with a useless narrative—I took up my abode in London; and, after a few years, sent the girls to an excellent school, and my son to Harrow. The talents and industry of Charles were a source of great gratification to me, and of pride to his mother. He passed through his school examinations with credit; and was looking forward to University honors at Cambridge, whither I had sent him. But who knows what may happen in the march of time? Who can anticipate the commands of Providence?”—

Here the old soldier paused; and, strongly compressing his lips, sat for some minutes silent, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. At length, recovering himself, he continued:—

“During a tour, which my wife and myself and our daughter and niece were making in Switzerland, I had fixed our head quarters at Berne; and there Charles joined us. He was delighted with that singular town; its arcades, magnificent terraces, fine fountains, and noble avenues. Our house was situated close to the Grass Kirchof or terrace which overhangs the Aar, and commanded a view of the rich country

extending between the city and the base of the mountains; and of the Alps beyond them, white with eternal snows. Charles was full of ardour, an enthusiastic lover of Nature, and possessed of insatiable curiosity, and his time being limited, he determined to employ every hour he could command in examining the country; and, therefore, now and then left us for two or three days together, on excursions to the more remarkable mountains and glaciers. On the last of these excursions—"here the veteran fetched a deep sigh—"he departed, immediately after breakfast, with an experienced guide, to visit the glaciers of the Eiger and Jungfrau. His mother, who had never before displayed any uneasiness on Charles's account during these expeditions, having, on this occasion, heard that these glaciers were dangerous to traverse, felt a strong presentiment that something would befall her son, and mentioned her apprehensions to me. I confess that, notwithstanding your stories, Doctor, of the Taishataragh,—I think you call it so?"—I nodded assent.—"I mean," continued the veteran, the second sight of your mountain regions, and the instinctive feelings under the dominion of which you would place man as well as brutes—I confess that I treated her apprehensions as the groundless

terror of an over-fond mother. She would not, however, be satisfied ; and, to calm her mind, I procured another guide to follow Charles, with a note beseeching his immediate return : at the same time, I secretly blamed myself for complying with her request ; and hoped that, for once, the dear boy would disregard my commands. Poor youth ! he was saved that pang ; for the note never reached his hand, the guide having, by some mistake, taken a different route.

“ Night came, and Charles did not return. The fears of his mother were now redoubled ; and the contagion of her terrors was communicated to both my daughter and niece. I endeavoured to compose their minds by suggesting, what was actually the case, that the messenger with his recall had not encountered him ; and that our poor boy would certainly return next day. It was in vain : fifty times were they at the door to see whether they could not descry his approach. The anxious countenance of my wife was indescribable : she would walk about the room for some time ; then sit down with her hands folded together, and start at every sound that indicated any thing like an approaching step.

“ At length, midnight came, and with it an

increase of all her apprehensions. I vainly persuaded her to retire to rest. She placed herself close to the window, with her eyes thrown out into the night, and her ears open to catch every casual sound : but all was stillness and silence. I sat by her, holding her hand in mine, sharing her anxiety ; for, by this time, my own fears were unaccountably excited ; and I felt ready to sink beneath the intense gaze of enquiry which every now and then she fixed upon my face, for minutes together, without uttering even a sigh. The tears poured down the cheeks of my daughter and poor Caroline, who stood hanging upon the back of my chair and that of my wife, watching her countenance and mine, while sighs and stifled hysterical sobbings broke from their bosoms : but still the wretched mother said nothing. At length a streak of twilight was seen upon the eastern horizon : my poor wife turned upon me a look of anguish, which I can never forget ; and, as I held her hand, I felt an involuntary shudder vibrate through her frame. I folded her in my arms ; when, as if suddenly loosened from the intensity of thought which had hitherto overpowered her, she heaved a deep sigh, then hid her face in my bosom, and gave vent to a flood of tears. ‘ Oh ! Augustus ! ’ exclaimed she, after a few minutes, ‘ I feel that I am doomed to be

wretched!—I fear!—I fear!——but the morning is breaking—you must go yourself to seek for poor Charles, and I will go with you——No, no! I cannot—I must live for my other dear children!’ and, disengaging herself from my embrace, she clasped the two girls in her arms, and all three wept aloud. Ah! Doctor,” continued the veteran, “there are circumstances in life which turn all our manliness to mockery. I silently wept with them; and it was not until my wife again urged my departure that I was conscious of the necessity of controlling my feelings.

“I left the house with a heavy heart, taking nothing with me but a stick shod with an iron point, which is used in mountain expeditions. My first object was to procure a horse; but the streets of Berne were as silent as the grave, and I perambulated them for some time without encountering a living thing, until one of the patrol issued from the arches of the guardhouse, and demanded my name and place of residence. I satisfied the enquiry, and, with his assistance, procured a horse, on which I left the city as soon as the gates were opened, as the first rays of the rising sun had glanced upon the summits of the snowy mountains. I crossed the bridge over the Aar, and took the road to Thun.

The sun rose with unusual brightness ; the freshness of the morning, the perfume of the lime trees, and the music of the feathered songsters warbled from every spray, so well calculated to cheer the mind and elevate the heart under ordinary circumstances, only added to the weight of anxiety which pressed upon mine. The gaiety of every object around me seemed a mockery of my feelings, and I rode on almost in a state of apathy. I reached Thun without having seen or heard any tidings of my poor boy. It was necessary either to leave my horse there, or to rest him if I wished to proceed by land. I determined to go up the lake after breakfasting, for which I entered the inn of the Bellevue. I here ascertained that a young Englishman, answering the description of Charles, had dined there on the preceding day, and left the inn in the company of two foreign gentlemen, with the intention, as the landlord understood, of proceeding up the lake and traversing the glaciers of the Jungfrau : ‘ but,’ added he, ‘ the thing is impossible : it has been only once accomplished, by some miners of the Valais, and never since attempted. I hope the young gentleman will come to no harm.’ This remark, Doctor ! did not, you may be sure, lessen my anxiety ; nor

was it diminished by the answers to the thousand questions which I put to the boatmen, as we pursued our way up the lake to Neuhaus, where we landed ; whence I proceeded to Interlacken, hired horses, and, having procured a guide to ascend the mountain, we departed for Lauterbrunnen.

“ When we arrived near the celebrated fall of the Staubach, I perceived a knot of the country people at the door of the inn at Lauterbrunnen, earnestly listening to the narration of a man, who, by his dress, appeared to be a guide. I involuntarily turned towards the group ; but a strong feeling of apprehension seized upon my frame ; I could not approach the spot ; and, therefore, I requested the guide to enquire what was the matter. I too soon read, in his undisguised countenance, as he returned, the result of his enquiries ; his feelings were evidently strongly excited, for he stood gazing at me, as if uncertain how to communicate his intelligence ; whilst I, dreading to hear it, yet tortured with suspense, charged him to speak—to tell me the worst—I was prepared to meet it.—How little we know ourselves ! I thought I could depend upon my courage : but when the guide, in a hesitating voice, replied—‘ I fear, sir, we need proceed

no farther'—the bridle dropped from my hand, and I felt that heart-sickness which makes every thing swim before the sight, so that I should have fallen from my horse if he had not assisted me to alight, and supported my steps into the inn.—Oh, Doctor !——”

Here the old gentleman paused for a few minutes, compressed his lips strongly together, tried to check two or three convulsive sobs, and struggled hard for the mastery of his feelings. He soon recovered his composure, and thus continued his narrative :—

“ On entering the house, I was led into a room, where—if possible, conceive my horror—where the first object which presented itself was the dead body of my poor boy, stretched upon a bed !—Every object vanished from my eyes : I felt as if life was passing away ; and instantly sunk upon the corpse in a state of complete insensibility. The humanity of the landlord and of the guides led them to carry me into another apartment. I slowly recovered my consciousness of existence ; but, for some minutes, I could not believe that all that had occurred was not a dream. Alas ! the truth flashed too quickly upon my mind ; and I shuddered in reflecting upon the effect which the communication of it would produce on my

wretched wife and my daughter. To be so suddenly deprived of a son of whom I was justly proud, on whose virtues and affection I relied for comfort in my advancing years—whose ripening talents were calculated to shed lustre upon his family, and who was, not forty hours before, in the full enjoyment of health and the vigour of youth, was more than my fortitude and even my resignation to the will of Providence could sustain. I groaned deeply within me, and secretly wished for death to terminate my agony. But we know not what we can support until we are tried. I threw myself in despair upon a bed, and remained for an hour in a kind of stupor, with my face hid in the pillow, until roused by the Curate of Lauterbrunen, who had been sent for, and who, taking me kindly by the hand, succeeded, by pouring the balm of religion upon my wounded spirit, in gradually restoring my composure of mind. This worthy man persuaded me to accompany him to his house, and to remain there during the night. He undertook to get the body of my poor boy conveyed to Thun, where, he convinced me, it would be more desirable to inter it than at Berne. I complied with his hospitable invitation; and, next morning, feeling that I was sufficiently

composed to listen to the recital of the event which had heaped upon me so much wretchedness, I sent for the guides who accompanied Charles, for he had hired two at Lauterbrunen, and received from them some details which you, Doctor, may find tedious."

I hastily assured him of the contrary. The old man wiped a tear from his eyes, and thus resumed his tale :—

"The foreign gentlemen, with whom Charles left the Bellevue, remained at Interlacken. After traversing, said the guides, the Wingern Alp, we ascended the great glacier between the Schrekhorn and Wetterhorn. We arrived at a chalet, where it was determined we should pass the night, which was fast approaching. The party found there two chamois hunters, who had kindled a fire, and were enjoying a supper of broiled meat and milk. They joined the hunters, and had finished their repast, when my boy went out. Although he did not return for half an hour, yet the guides thought it improbable that he would wander far from the chalet ; but, as nearly an hour had elapsed, and he did not appear, they agreed to go out and look after him. He was not within call. They hallooed in every direction in vain ; when, in traversing the glacier, they heard groans ; and, in listening,

ascertained that they issued from one of the fissures of the ice. It was evident that the groans proceeded from some person who had fallen into the fissure, and the natural inference was, that it could be no other than my unfortunate son. One of the guides remained on the spot, whilst the other returned to the chalet for assistance ; and, by the aid of ropes, and with the help of the chamois hunters, they succeeded in raising the body, for—" here my poor friend could scarcely proceed—" life was already extinct. The fissure into which he had fallen was upwards of eighty feet in depth——.

" On the following morning, my excellent host accompanied me to Thun, where the body of my poor child was laid in the grave ; and I prepared to proceed homewards with a heavy heart. I took my passage in the boat which proceeds down the Aar to Berne, in order that I might arrive there before my presence should be suspected, and be enabled to take measures for breaking the soul-rending intelligence of Charles's fate to my wife, by the aid of a friend, before I should see her. Doctor ! I have felt, as you also must have done, the awful sensations which press upon the mind during the stillness of expectation before a battle ; feel-

ings from which the boldest are not exempt. I have laid nights upon the wet ground, with my thoughts turned upon home and all its comforts, in the instant dread of being attacked and butchered by a savage enemy ; but I never experienced any agitation of spirits or of nerves to equal that with which I now approached my home, my wife, and family. The friend, whose assistance I sought, was not in Berne, and was not expected to return for some days."

" I was forced to bear the disappointment, for I knew no other person to whom I could apply. I was on the threshold of my dwelling—my hand was even upon the latch ; which, however, I dared not lift ; and I stood for some time wavering whether I should enter or retreat, when the sound of a step within determined my purpose—I entered—it was my daughter, who was crossing the hall : she flew towards me ; but, seeing me alone, stopped short, and gazed intently upon my face, as if to read what was passing in my soul. Although I had resolved to summon all the stoicism I could command to my aid, in this interview, yet it all vanished in an instant.

" ' He is then dead ! ' she exclaimed, and fell prostrate on the floor. The sound of her

fall brought my niece and a servant to the spot ; and, with their assistance, I had just raised the apparently lifeless girl, when I thought that I heard my wife shriek ; and, therefore, leaving Letitia in their hands, I proceeded to enter the parlour, the door of which was sufficiently open to command a view of what was passing in the hall. Conceive, if you can, my dear friend, the horror which I experienced on seeing my poor wife also in a swoon, as if in the act of advancing from the chair on which she had been sitting, perfectly insensible, and utterly unconscious of everything around her. My God ! I exclaimed, in the agony of despair, as I raised her in my arms, when will the cup of my suffering be full ? but, recollecting myself, I called aloud to the servant to run to the nearest physician. Dr. Tribullet arrived in a few minutes. On examining the condition both of my poor wife and my daughter, he ordered them to be conveyed to bed ; and, as nothing could be done during the continuance of the paroxysm, he requested that they should be closely watched, and that he should be apprised of the first appearance of returning sensibility. I sat for many hours by the bedside, holding the hand of my wife in mine ; and only convinced by a feeble flutter, which could be per-

ceived at the region of the heart, and a thin vapour which spread upon a clear mirror when it was held near her mouth and nostrils, that she was not dead. At length she roused, as if from a deep sleep, and looked at me for an instant; then turned in bed and complained of nausea and dizziness. I sank down upon my knees and thanked the Almighty for her life: and, as Dr. Tribullet was in the house with Letitia, who had recovered her sensibility an hour before, he instantly administered what was requisite, and desired that both patients might be left to repose.

“It would be tedious, my dear friend, to enter into the details of Mrs. Standard’s restoration to health. Many months elapsed before she was able to leave her apartment; and it was only three months ago that we arrived in England. You must have remarked, Doctor, the change in my wife’s temper and spirits: you are now in possession of the cause of the irritability of the one, and the shade of melancholy which has overspread the other. Since the loss of her son, she has not been the same woman; and I fear that the sight of this mountainous country has awakened impressions which, I fondly hoped, were nearly obliterated. You must bear, my good friend,

with her little caprices, and think of her rather as she was, than as she is:—yet, how can I hope for that from you, when I cannot stand her humours myself.”

I assured the worthy veteran that I sympathized sincerely in his sorrow, and was not at all surprized that such afflictions should have affected the temper of Mrs. Standard.

I was ruminating on the story which I had heard, and comparing the distresses of my friend with my own, when the party, that had been enjoying the sweetness of the evening, entered. Tea being finished, it became a question, in what manner the evening should be spent? The Advocate, full of spirit and boyish vivacity, proposed the game of hunt the slipper: the Cantab thought the proposal *infra dignitatem*, and appealed to me on the subject. The communication of my old friend had given a seriousness to my train of thought, which ill-accorded with the proposition of the Advocate; and, although I did not agree with the Cantab, yet I decided against the game; and hinted that we might pass the time very agreeably in telling stories. The suggestion was universally relished: the bell was rung, and Dugald ordered to replenish the grate with fresh peats. A circle was formed round the blazing fire;

and the Colonel, having lighted his cigar, decreed that the Clergyman should tell the first story. Mr. Mordaunt willingly accorded with the decision; and commenced the following recital. But, before inscribing it upon these pages, it is necessary to draw the portrait, and give some account of the narrator.

Mr. Mordaunt, for whom I feel an uncommon interest, on so short an acquaintance, is a clergyman of the established church of England: he is, as my friend Standard has informed me, the younger son of an old family of considerable consequence in the county of Buckingham. He has a good living in his native county, and has been induced to visit Scotland by the perusal of the works of Sir Walter Scott. He is about thirty-five years of age, tall and handsome, although rather spare in his person. His face is pale, but its features are well-proportioned and elegant; his eyes dark, penetrating, deeply set in their sockets, and shaded by regular, arching, full eye-brows, harmonizing in colour with a profusion of jetty locks, which, naturally curling, set off to great advantage a nobly elevated and expanded forehead. When Mr. Mordaunt's features are at rest, they are expressive of deep thoughtfulness, tinged with melancholy: when he

speaks, they become lighted up with a sparkling vivacity, and a smile truly fascinating. His voice is soft and harmonious; and his language both correct and appropriate; and, although devoid of impetuosity, yet his opinions are delivered with an earnestness which demonstrates that they have been seriously considered and frequently reviewed before being hazarded in conversation. Such is Mr. Mor-daunt: and such was the extent of his history in this portion of the diary; but as the cause of the melancholy here noticed by the Doctor is brought forward in another part of the journal, and gives an interest to this gentleman's character which it would not otherwise possess, the editor ventures to transfer the details as the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

“ ———— vows, the hours that we have spent
 When we have chid the hasty footed time
 For parting us—oh! and is all forgot ?”

MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM.

THE remark of the Colonel, that circumstances chiefly develop character, and fashion the man, was strikingly illustrated in the early career of the Reverend Frederick Mordaunt. At Cambridge, where he was entered as a Commoner in St. John’s, he was designated “handsome Mordaunt;” and, although his talents were generally admitted to be above mediocrity, and he was a good classic, yet he never could advance in mathematics, and was regarded one of those men who are ready for anything but the College exercises, and who, with the powers of doing much, produce nothing. His rooms were situated at the foot of the staircase, round the angle of the tower that forms

the entrance into the first quadrangle ; and, from their facility of access, were admirably adapted for the resort of idlers, and those who preferred gossip to lectures or reading. The manners of Mr. Mordaunt were as elegant as his appearance was prepossessing, frank, manly, graceful, and easy ; strictly gentlemanlike, and perfectly devoid of anything like obtrusiveness or selfishness ; his acquaintance was, therefore, courted by men of very superior rank to himself ; and, with a very slender income, he received invitations to the select wine parties of the fellow Commoners, sufficient to excite much envy among those of his own class ; yet none ever breathed a suspicion that young Mordaunt was a tuft hunter. Every one indeed liked him ; from the Proctor to the bed-maker he had secured unalienable affection ; even the heads of the University, whilst they affirmed that he had numerous faults, admitted that they were those of exuberant animal spirits, such as few would hesitate to palliate and none to forgive.

“ Mordaunt,” said the Reverend Johnathan Aimwell, the Proctor, “ is the veriest scape-grace we’ve ever had at John’s ; nevertheless I cannot help liking the youth.”

“ Ah, Mr. Mordaunt !” would the Janiter often exclaim, rubbing his eyes, as he opened

the wicket at dawn, to Frederick's—'It is I, Tim,'—you'll cost me my place some day."

"Heaven forbid, Tim!—there is half a sovereign for you to buy snuff."

"Lord mend you, you're a generous soul!" was the usual reply of Tim, as he shut the gate after the irregular Commoner.

As Mr. Mordaunt was intended for the army, the profession of his father before he succeeded to the baronetcy and the estate which he then enjoyed, he was not expected to take high honours; but securing friends was regarded as essential: consequently his future prospects were in some respects wholly dependent on himself. The society into which he was thrown, however, was ill calculated to foster the prudence and discretion that his limited college income demanded: debts were incurred, and the letters of Sir Charles contained strictures upon the habits and expenditure of dependent young men, that were any thing but palatable to his son. Yet Frederick Mordaunt acknowledged, secretly, the propriety of these paternal remonstrances; and, although, whilst, with his companions, he openly talked of the stinginess of the old buck, yet his conscience smote him when he calmly reflected on the career of extravagance and folly which he

had entered upon : his mind, indeed, was of that elastic description, that although it could be bent at the will of others, yet it generally righted itself again when retrospection turned his thoughts inwards. He resolved to amend : but two horses and a servant, frequent wine parties, with their attendant desserts, and many etceteras, could not be sustained upon two hundred a year. The butler's and confectioner's bills, therefore, remained unsettled term after term, until their amount was startling ; and he dreaded the moment when his residence at St. John's must expire, and they would necessarily meet the eye of his father. The time at length arrived ; and the result was a coolness between the parent and child. How often might this be avoided, were there a little less neglect on the one side, and a little less thoughtlessness on the other ! In the present instance, as much blame was due to the offended parent as to the censurable son. The extravagant youth was punished by receiving a commission in the Guards, with an allowance scarcely sufficient, in addition to his pay, to support his rank as an officer ; and he found himself placed in a situation which, to any young man of limited income, however considerate, is fraught with difficulty and danger.

But the buoyant spirits of Frederick never allowed him to lift the dark veil that hangs over the future.

The only real friendship that Frederick Mordaunt had formed at St. John's, was with the Honorable Dudley Manvers, the third son of the Earl of Rochdale, who was intended for the church. He was lively, animated, and amiable; calculated to shine in society, and susceptible of enjoying all the amusements peculiar to his period of life; yet possessing such a well-regulated mind, that he had entered upon the study of his future profession with a determination to make his life an illustration of his preaching, and to gain, even during his probation, that character for steadiness of conduct which would be essential after he should receive orders and really become a pastor. He loved Mordaunt for the genuine goodness and worth that, although buried beneath a thousand faults, he had descried, and had set down as the natural inmates of his heart. A few years the senior of Frederick, he occasionally ventured to become his mentor; and had, on several occasions, prevented him from embarking in adventures which would have led to irretrievable ruin.

If he could not induce him to read mathe-

matics, he succeeded in urging him to cultivate his natural taste for polite literature and natural history ; for Frederick Mordaunt possessed a fine poetic vein ; knew well the use of his pencil ; was an enthusiast in his admiration of the picturesque ; and had acquired some reputation as a botanist and ornithologist. In every gentlemanly accomplishment, indeed, he took delight, and even had acquired an accurate knowledge of history ; but the more severe sciences held out no allurements to his romantic, uncurbed, imaginative mind ; and consequently they were neglected, if not despised.

The friendship between these two young men procured for Mordaunt invitations to Rochdale Park, which were so frequently accepted, that he at length felt more at home at the Earl's, and was more frequently there, than at Avenford, the seat of his father, Sir Charles. It was not, however, the society of Dudley Manvers, twin brother in his affection as he truly was, that drew Mordaunt so frequently to Rochdale Park ; a more attractive object had produced a new feeling in his susceptible bosom ; and a change was effected in the thoughtless and dissipated Collegian, that no admonitions, from any quarter, could have produced.

Lady Rochdale had died soon after the birth of Dudley, leaving three children, all of whom were boys; but, on the death of a favorite brother, who had been left a widower with an only child, the Earl had adopted Louisa Manvers, and educated her as a daughter. She had completed her education, and had arrived at the most interesting of all periods in female life, namely, girlhood ripening into womanhood; and she possessed personal attractions of the highest order, with a quick, animated, open disposition: it was therefore not wonderful that she made a deep impression on the heart of Frederick Mordaunt.

Louisa Manvers was rather below the middle stature of her sex, of light and elegant form, with a face which, if not cast in the mould of Grecian perfection, was nevertheless exquisitely beautiful; so full of sweetness, and so expressive of every varying impress of the mind, as to possess charms that the most perfect style of beauty, alone, could not have imparted. Her hair, which was of a light auburn, and was still allowed to cluster in natural ringlets upon her shoulders and around her face, set off to advantage the clear ivory of her complexion, heightened by the softened bloom of health and youth that suffused her cheek;

whilst the keen intelligence that beamed in her clear blue eyes, rendered every varying expression of her countenance irresistibly attractive.

Miss Manvers, on leaving school, had been placed under the care of Lady Mary, a maiden sister of the Earl, who, although ill qualified for the task, yet had superintended his domestic affairs since the death of the Countess. She was one of those beings whose mind, like a maggot in a nut, is solely employed in corroding its corporeal tenement. In simple language, she was an hypochondriac; and, like most persons suffering under that malady, was selfish to a degree. In her youth she had been a spoiled child, a beauty, and a reigning belle; and had rejected many eligible offers of marriage, from the hope of receiving still better: for, having no heart that could be warmed into genuine love, marriage was regarded by her as a mere matter of settlement; and, consequently, as she greatly overrated her own value, she was at length left to suffer under the sting of disappointed pride, and to enjoy single blessedness at sixty-five.

“How do I look this morning, dear Louisa?” was Lady Mary’s daily salutation, on entering the breakfast parlour, and holding up her sallow, shrivelled countenance to the inspection of her niece.

“ Oh, very well, Aunt,” was the usual reply.

“ I am delighted ! I took my rhubarb pill last night, but no anodyne. Dr. P. told me that they act in opposite ways ; did he not, my dear ?”

“ Probably he did.”

“ -Nay, Louisa, you must have heard him. Do you think I may take coffee after the rhubarb ?”

“ As you please, Aunt.”

“ It is not a matter of pleasure, my dear ! Nobody cares less about these matters than I do, but when health is concerned. Perhaps tea will be better ?”

“ Shall I make tea ?”

“ Stay, my dear !—just put your finger on my pulse.”

“ Indeed, Aunt, I have no knowledge of the pulse,” would Miss Manvers reply, as she good-naturedly laid her finger on the skinny wrist of the old lady.

“ Does it beat quick, my dear Louisa ?—Hah ! I feel a little palpitation at this moment. Tea will not do—coffee is antispasmodic—but, I don’t know—just ring the bell, my dear ! and let Peter step to Dr. P.’s, and ask the question. But, no—take paper, and write to my dictation.

“ My dear Dr. P——,

“ I took my pill last night ; nevertheless I feel a slight palpitation this morning : say whether tea or coffee is preferable for breakfast. What think you of calves'-feet jelly, warmed ? Is fish good ? or, is animal food preferable to all ? Answer by a monosyllable the tea and coffee query : the rest when we meet.

“ Yours truly,

“ MARY MANVERS.”

In this manner the breakfast hour was consumed by Lady Mary, by inquiries into the state of her looks. Before noon she had a visit from Dr. P——, “ poor dear,” as she termed him, “ who only understood her constitution ;” and who went through the ceremony of feeling her pulse, examining her tongue, deciding on the clearness of her eyes, and answering queries that had been regularly asked and replied to daily for the last twenty years. At eleven, she walked for half an hour, on a terrace which commanded an extensive and rich panoramic view of the adjoining country, but which was rarely looked upon by Lady Mary : at twelve, the Doctor came ; and at one, a mutton chop, half a round of brown

bread, and a glass of brandy and water—the Doctor having denounced wine, as apt to turn acid on the stomach—formed the regular lunch of the invalid. Whatever was the nature of the weather, sunshine or rain, storm or calm, Lady Mary stepped into the carriage regularly as the clock struck two, and was driven for three hours; her attention during the drive being solely occupied in determining when it was proper to keep the windows of the carriage up or down, to open one window and to shut another as the turnings of the road exposed or sheltered either side from the wind. She reclined in a corner of the carriage, with an air pillow at her back, and, as she never shared her drive with any one, she indulged her imagination in ascertaining whether her hand was more or less filled up than on the preceding day; whether her heart verged to any thing like palpitation; and whether her lips felt moist or dry. After dinner, Lady Mary slept an hour on the sofa in the drawing room; talked over her complaints with any one who was polite enough to listen; or, if she was not fortunate enough to gain a listener, she proceeded tacitly with some worsted work; took a cup of boiled milk with a bottle of soda water poured

over it, instead of tea ; and retired to bed exactly at ten o'clock.

With such a person to superintend her, it was not likely that Louisa Manvers would be benefited either by instruction or example ; and Lady Mary was too much absorbed in her own feelings and her imaginary ailments, either to know or to care how her ward was occupied. Lord Rochdale was seldom at the Park, consequently he was ignorant of what went on there : the formation of Miss Manvers' conduct, therefore, was the result of her previous education and her own good sense. The former was that which a fashionable boarding-school could give, accomplishments of every kind, but little substantial information ; the latter, fortunately, had been bountifully bestowed by Providence, and tended to rectify many defects of the former. With a quick perception, a correct judgment, and an insatiable curiosity, she was naturally constituted for acquiring knowledge ; and lost no opportunity which either conversation or reading afforded to supply the defects of her school education. It was, indeed, in aiding her studies, and in directing her reading in history and in polite literature, that Frederick Mordaunt had first

gained her esteem, in his frequent visits to the Park, before her heart felt that impression in favour of the young handsome Collegian, which he had sought to cherish from the first moment that he had seen the lovely girl: and as a more tender feeling towards him awoke in her bosom, it soon ripened into the most ardent attachment, from the frequent opportunities which the hypochondriasm of Lady Mary, the assiduous studies of Dudley Manvers, and the absence of Lord Rochdale, afforded to the young couple of being together.

Of all the sympathies that occupy the human mind, assuredly none is so pure, so wholly free from passion, so closely allied to those feelings that may be supposed the attributes of angels, as that love which first awakens in the heart of a young and innocent female. When the heart also has been left untouched by the contagion of example, and virtue, not wholly extinguished, plays like a lambent flame in the bosom of a generous and romantic youth; true love, awakened there, elevates and purifies the heart, and leads to actions and conduct of an exalted and noble character. Such was its influence on the thoughtless, gay, dissipated Johnian. At Cambridge, Frederick Mordaunt became thoughtful and reserved; seldom joined

the wine parties ; kept regular hours ; delighted in solitary evening walks, his only companion a volume of some favourite poet ; and, except Dudley Manvers, was openly accused of having cut all his former associates : yet the college studies were still neglected ; the terms were thought insufferably long, and the vacations were hailed with a delight which was formerly unfelt. When at Rochdale Park, Frederick was also an altered person ; he was no longer anxious to join the hounds ; even the amusement of angling, of which he was passionately fond, was neglected ; when he rode, it was to accompany Louisa Manvers ; when he walked out, it was to sketch with her some picturesque group of trees, to point out some new view, to gather wild flowers, to describe them, and to fix their places in the natural arrangement ; and, when at home, he was generally to be found in the library reading to Louisa, while she embroidered beside him, ever and anon engaging him in conversation upon particular passages in the volume under perusal. Often would she request explanations of passages which she fully understood, merely because she delighted in listening to the comments of Frederick—the sound of his voice was music, and her greatest enjoyment was to

watch the varying expressions of his manly countenance as he became animated with his subject. As she gazed, she longed to give utterance to all her feelings, to lay her heart open to the object of its affection; but that innate modesty which breathes its pure air over the young thought, in the female bosom uncontaminated by the atmosphere of fashion, sealed her lips, and raised a secret blush when reflection arraigned her inclination at the tribunal of propriety. In this manner time passed imperceptibly: the young people felt that their happiness was centered in each other. If Frederick were enticed to take a day's ramble with Dudley, Louisa found the hours pass heavily, and the day totally devoid of interest she would take her walk on the terrace or in the shrubbery; water her pinks and roses with the same care, and train her honeysuckles and sweet-peas with the same taste as usual, or throw her eye over the pages of some favourite author; but the inspiring genius of all her occupations, the voice which cheered and encouraged her in her little pursuits, being absent, the delight they diffused was dissipated, the magic thrown over them was fled—they no longer pleased. “How is it,” she would ask herself, “that I am unhappy when Frederick is absent? yet I

fear to display to him what I feel—is it the inconsistency of human nature to desire that which is wrong?—is it wrong ?” and the warm blush would overspread her cheek. It was on such occasions that Louisa felt the loss of a mother, and that she became truly awakened to her forlorn condition, and the utter valueless character of Lady Mary as a guardian. Frederick had not declared himself; his great attentions to her might, perhaps, be solely the consequence of his warm friendship for her brother: and, although her heart dissented from this conclusion, yet she was perplexed with doubts, and was only happy in the society of Frederick Mordaunt.

Things could not long continue in this state. Mr. Mordaunt had only one term more to spend at St. John's, when it was expected he would take his degree in Arts; but, the unfavourable accounts that his tutor gave of his progress in the college studies, added to his great dislike for mathematics, rendered it evident to Sir Charles that his grade on examination would be so low, the degree would confer no honour upon him: the Baronet therefore determined that he should at once leave St. John's, and join his regiment. He was, therefore, ordered to hold himself in readiness

to repair to the metropolis, as soon as his father could make the necessary arrangements for that purpose.

The above intelligence conveyed to Frederick Mordaunt a mixed sensation of pleasure and regret: he felt pleased in the prospect of being emancipated from studies that he had always disliked; and which, as he was intended for the army, he considered useless to him: he experienced, on the other hand, the deepest regret that a very unfavourable impression would be made respecting him on the mind of his parent, by the heavy bills which he had incurred in his days of heedless dissipation: and what pressed still more heavily upon his heart, were the obstacles that his military duties would oppose to his desire of repairing, as often as he had been accustomed, to Rochdale Park. The change that his visits there had effected, led him, besides, to reflect more seriously upon his debts, than could have been expected from him: and such always is the influence of a well-directed, virtuous attachment on the mind of youth, when not utterly lost and wrecked in the vortex of irretrievable degradation. The rubicon, however, which he so much dreaded, soon lay behind him: Sir Charles had settled all his debts, and removed

every difficulty of a pecuniary nature that could in any degree impede his future advancement in life ; but, in doing this, he condemned his son to a banishment from his presence until he could retrieve the character he had lost. There can be no doubt that, however merited, such a step in a parent, with a view of correcting the extravagance and dissipation of a son, is most injudicious. In a mind, not softened down by the sympathies that had awakened in the bosom of Frederick new and better feelings, the consequence of such harshness would be a renewal of the evils it was intended to correct. Frederick felt very different ; for, although banished from the presence of his father, and degraded in his own opinion, yet he was capable of justly appreciating what appeared to him to be a stretch of the utmost liberality in his parent ; namely, the passing over in silence the failings that deserved so severely his reprobation, and the payments of debts which had been so heedlessly and improperly incurred. He therefore determined to effect a complete reformation in himself, and to demonstrate to the offended Baronet that he was not utterly lost.

In obeying the summons to join his regiment, Mordaunt had reserved a few days to be spent at Rochdale on his way to the metropolis. As

he entered the park gates, his heart beat with its usual ardency: Louisa met him with the same sweet smile; but it seemed as if his reception was not of that warm and encouraging description which he was wont to experience; and this feeling was strengthened by the surprise of Lady Mary, that he should appear at Rochdale at a time when she imagined that he ought to have been reading closely for his degree.

“Are you not astonished, my dear Louisa, to see Mr. Mordaunt here at this time?—Perhaps your health requires attention, Mr. Frederick—will you consult dear Doctor P——?”

“I assure you that my health is excellent, Lady Mary; but it is not my father’s wish that I should take a degree in Arts, nor have I any ambition for such an honour.”

“You surprise me, Mr. Mordaunt!” exclaimed Lady Mary. “How chilly the evening air is, it truly pierces through me;—I must send to Dr. P—— about my anodyne. Mr. Mordaunt, Dudley took a high degree:—did he not, dear Louisa?”

Louisa, who had appreciated too greatly the acquirements of Frederick, was silent, and changed the conversation to the subject of Lady Mary’s complaints; but she felt secretly disappointed in learning from Mordaunt him-

self that he was to take no honours, on account of his neglect of the college studies. Frederick, on the other hand, endeavoured in vain to decry the value of Academical honours.

“Were I a man,” said Louisa, “nothing short of the rank of first wrangler would satisfy my ambition.”

“What advantage could accrue from it to a soldier?” replied Frederick. Were my destination the law or the church, then the title of A. M. might prove useful; but to a military man——”

“I will not argue the point with you, my dear friend; but were I a man,” would Louisa continue, “I would strain every nerve to rise in public estimation; and not only be the first in my profession, but to ornament it, whatever it might be, by learning and science.”

These remarks, from one who held a principal place in his affections, were more cutting to Frederick Mordaunt than any thing that could have been urged against him by another; and he now, for the first time, clearly perceived the truth, that it is the intellectual merits, and not the personal endowments of the man that are valued by a woman of good sense and superior understanding. Still the real esteem of Louisa suffered

no abatement : she thought that she perceived, in the character of Frederick, that which would in time enable him to retrieve all that he had lost at college, and to acquire reputation and respect in the profession to which he had devoted himself.

The time that Mr. Mordaunt had allotted for his visit to Rochdale was necessarily limited ; he was therefore anxious, before his departure, to explain fully to Louisa the sentiments that occupied his heart respecting herself : for, frequent and close as had been the intimacy of these two young people, and numerous as the opportunities had been of laying open their feelings to each other, yet nothing had even been hinted by either that would have authorised any one to regard them as actually engaged. In all their intercourse, nothing ever had been said of love, although both had felt it in its full force : the sentiment in the bosom of both was too pure to find its utterance in language. If Frederick walked or rode with Louisa, his attentions were too pointed and direct to be misconstrued : his frequent and earnest gaze in her face, in conversation, expressed more than a simple enquiry ; and, if he ventured to take her hand, the thrill that vibrated through his frame too clearly pointed

out the state of his feelings to be misunderstood, even by one so little acquainted with the world as Louisa Manvers. Nature, indeed, has bestowed on women a quickness and nicety of discrimination, in matters of the heart, to which the opposite sex are total strangers. Every sentiment of Frederick was tinged with romantic and poetic imaginings ; his love was the breathing of the soul, devoid of the grossness of our common nature ; the smile, the impress of her feelings that beamed in the look of the lovely girl, was to him an inestimable blessing, which threw a gleam of felicity over his existence that nothing else could impart.

The sun was already on the decline, when the lovers, who had strolled into the park, were returning to a late dinner.

“ How soft and delightful,” said Louisa, “ is the repose of early evening at this season of the year. The lengthened shadows of the trees on the greensward, the gold and purple tinting of the clouds stretching along the horizon, and the modulated concert of the feathered tribes, all combine to soothe into harmony every passion of the human breast. I am often surprised that the gay and fashionable can leave such scenes for the close and crowded

rooms of London. You will forget the country, Frederick, and all that belongs to it, when you enter that vortex of fashion."

"Never, never!" said Frederick, taking her hand gently in his and earnestly gazing in her countenance; "never, whilst my senses are preserved to me."

Louisa drew a deep sigh, and for a few minutes they walked on without interchanging a word.

"I shall, perhaps, occasionally hear of you from Dudley or the Earl," continued she.

"With your permission, dear Louisa, you shall hear of me from one much more deeply interested in the happiness and welfare of both of us, than either the Earl or my friend Dudley."

Louisa made no reply, and gently withdrew her hand from his. The opportunity which Frederick had long sought for, seemed now arrived; he twice essayed to speak, but a suffocating feeling prevented him: at length, throwing off all restraint, he thus expressed himself:—

"I have often, dear Louisa, longed for the opportunity of laying before you the secret of my heart; and now, that it is afforded to me, I feel that it is almost impossible to give it utterance——" he stopped short.

“ I understand you, Frederick,” replied Louisa, whilst a deep crimson overspread her countenance ; “ I am not yet so much a woman of the world as to be able to conceal my own feelings.”

“ I fear,” said Frederick, eagerly pressing the hand, which she had stretched out to him, to his lips, “ that the heart which I have to offer to you is scarcely worthy of your acceptance ; all that is good in it is yours, and therefore, in proffering it, I am only restoring that which you have so liberally bestowed.”

Louisa blushed deeply again.

“ Frederick,” said she, “ every thing depends upon yourself: the affection which you have secured, can never be altered, unless by your own act. I have, perhaps, too rashly exposed to you the state of my feelings ; but I am sure that I shall not sink in your esteem for this candid avowal of them.”

“ How can you, for a moment, suppose that to be possible,” replied Frederick, passionately ; and he was about to proceed, when his friend Dudley’s greyhound bounded before them, and his master immediately came up and interrupted the conversation.

Ample opportunities were afforded for the further exposition of the sentiments of the

young couple in the few days that Frederick passed at Rochdale Park. The period of his departure at length arrived, and he bade adieu, with a promise to write at least once a week.

For some months after his arrival in the metropolis, the young guardsman fulfilled to the letter the duty upon which he had resolved: he resisted every solicitation of his fellow officers to enter into parties of wasteful expense and gaiety: he was resolved to study arms as a profession, and he feared that such indulgences would withdraw his mind from the pursuits necessary to advance him in his military career. Happy would it have been had this condition of mind continued: but the character of Mor-daunt was such, that, sooner or later, it was certain to bend to the inclinations of those with whom he at the time associated.

At first he wrote regularly to Rochdale; then a week or two passed without this promise being fulfilled; at length the intervals extended to months; and, although the letters of Louisa were regularly transmitted every week, yet they lay, if not utterly neglected, yet at least unanswered. Louisa felt keenly the change in the affection of her lover, and as she had fostered her secret solely in her own bosom, the disappointment which now preyed upon her was

the keener, and the wound which it inflicted was more deeply felt ; her health gradually began to give way, and a cough, which was the first very obvious indication of this change, soon attracted the attention even of Lady Mary. A physician was consulted ; he pronounced her complaint to be consumption, and recommended her removal to a warmer climate : but the disease was too deeply seated : the health, strength, and spirits of the interesting girl sunk rapidly ; the bloom of her cheeks was exchanged for the flush of hectic ; her eye acquired a pearly lustre ; she breathed short ; obtained no sleep, owing to the incessant cough ; and wasted to a shadow.

Her cousin, Dudley Manvers, who had, a short time before, removed to a living at some distance from Rochdale Park, was sent for, and soon arrived at his father's house. He was shocked at the change which was so evident in his cousin ; and he saw that the disease had taken too firm a hold of the constitution to be expelled, even by the most energetic resources of the medical art. Dudley had observed the growing attachment between his friend and Louisa ; and suspecting that this had some cause in the altered condition of his cousin's health, he questioned her respecting it, and

soon elicited the truth. He feared it was too late to effect any change, under the circumstances ; still he resolved to make the attempt, and, with the consent and advice of the Earl, who had arrived at the Park, after Parliament rose, he immediately set off for London. . . .

He found Mordaunt at his lodgings, the gay and volatile man of fashion. He was dressing for dinner. At the sight of his friend, he sprang forward to meet him. The enquiry, "how are they all at Rochdale?" was upon his lips, when the grave look of his friend checked his impetuosity ; and, shaking him warmly by the hand, he simply welcomed him to London.

After the usual salutations were passed, Mr. Manvers opened the particular occasion of his visit.

"I am come, my dear Mordaunt," said he, "upon a most distressing embassy :—poor Louisa is dying!"

"Impossible !—you do not mean to say so ? I left her—"

"Yes, Frederick, in perfect health, eighteen months ago : and had you fulfilled those resolutions that you then formed, perhaps the dear girl might now have been in the same condition as at that time."

“ Stop, for Heaven’s sake, Manvers !—do not accuse me as the murderer of one the dearest to my heart ! Tell me what I can do ?—how I can avert—” and, without concluding the sentence, he seized the hands of his friend, and looked in his face with an intensity as if he would have read his very soul.

“ I fear, my dear Mordaunt,” said Mr. Manvers, “ it is too late to alter the fate of poor Louisa.”

“ Gracious powers !” exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt—“ that I should live to hear such a sentence pronounced upon me !”

“ My dear Mordaunt,” said Mr. Manvers, touched by the poignant distress of his friend, “ you greatly mistake me. If I have blamed you, I know too well the unhappy flexibility of your disposition, to condemn you, or to set down as a crime that which has been wholly the result of circumstances, operating upon a mind that is too susceptible of present impressions, and is readily moulded into any shape by passing events. But I am not come to read a lecture to you ; it is to urge your immediate presence at Rochdale Park, to gratify Louisa, by enabling her to take a last farewell of you, before that event occurs which she is fully aware is inevitable.”

Mr. Mordaunt, who had sunk upon a chair, and covered his face with his hands, remained silent ; but sighed deeply with excess of agony.

“ Nay, Frederick,” said Mr. Manvers ; “ no regrets can undo what has been done. We have a duty to perform, which will require all the Christian philosophy we can summon to the task. Rouse yourself ; solicit immediate leave of absence ; and prepare to be off for Rochdale early to-morrow morning.”

Mr. Mordaunt raised his head. There was a calm, settled look of benignity, devoid of any trace of severity or reproach, on the countenance of his friend ; a faint smile even beamed through the moisture that filled his eyes ; and his hand was extended.

“ Come, Frederick,” said he, “ let us forget the past, and think of what we have now to do.”

The breath of Mr. Mordaunt was held, whilst, with one hand on the arm of the chair and the other on his knee, as if arrested in the act of rising, he gazed on the countenance of his friend. The kindness which beamed in his looks, and the equanimity of his manner, completely subdued the young officer : he rushed into his arms, and, bending his forehead upon his shoulder, gave vent to his grief in a silent flood of tears.

CHAPTER IV.

i.

“ Most sacred fyre, that burnest mightily
 In living brests, ykindled first above
 Emong th’ eternal spheres and lamping sky,
 And thence poured into men, which men call love !
 Not that same which doth base affections move
 In brutish minds, —————
 But that sweet fit that doth true beauty love,
 And chooseth virtue for his dearest dame,
 Whence spring all noble deeds and never-dying fame.

ii.

Well did antiquity a god thee deeme.”

Fairy Queen.

ON the following morning, the two friends were on the road to Rochdale Park. It was a beautiful autumnal day, fresh, clear, and invigorating: the reapers were busy in the fields, and the shocks of corn, standing in close array, displayed the abundance of the harvest; whilst the warm, mellow tints of the changing groves gave an interest to each turn of the road, which would at any other time have awakened the poetic feelings of Frederick: but all passed unnoticed. Little, indeed, was observed, and less was said, on the journey: there was a marked reserve between the friends, who oc-

cupied each corner of the carriage; and it was only after entering the park, when they were traversing the noble avenue of elms that formed the approach to the mansion, that Mr. Manvers, pressing the hand of Frederick, endeavoured to raise his spirits, and urged him to maintain, in the meeting with his cousin, all the fortitude that he could summon to his aid.

“Every dispensation of Providence,” continued he, “has in it some prospective beneficence. To Louisa the change can only be productive of happiness: to you, Frederick, it may prove a blessing—a salutary corrective of that career into which I fear your residence in the metropolis has plunged you. Pardon, my dear friend, the seeming austerity of this remark:—if I did not——”

But, before he could finish the sentence the carriage stopped, and a servant, issuing from the hall, opened the door. Mr. Manvers alighted from the carriage, and was followed by his friend; but he observed that a tremor had spread over his frame, and that his colour came and went: Frederick, however, immediately summoned up his presence of mind, and walked firmly onward.

“I expected to have met the Earl or my Aunt here,” said Mr. Manvers, as they entered

the drawing-room ; “ but I have no doubt, my dear Mordaunt ! that you are better pleased to be spared an interview with either, until you can recover the shock which your entrance again under this roof has, evidently, produced on your nerves. I will go and announce our arrival, and order a servant to conduct you to your apartment. It is not the old room, Frederick ! poor Louisa has occupied that ever since she was unable to come down stairs — she liked the view which it commands : ” — and, in saying this, he hurried out of the room.

Mordaunt was no sooner left alone, than his eye fell upon every well-known object in the apartment, which seemed so exactly in the condition in which he had left it as almost to light up, in his mind, the idea that all which had occurred in the interval was a delusion—a dream : —and he could scarcely persuade himself that he should not see the door open and Louisa enter, as formerly, to welcome his arrival. Lady Mary’s worsted-work, a glass, her medicine, a minim measure, and Buchan, lay on the little table, close to the sofa, exactly in the same order : the worsted-work apparently not farther advanced than when he last saw it : each chair occupied its wonted place ; and the same books covered the table. A small portfolio of draw-

ings, however, which he had given to Miss Manvers, was not there. On walking to the window, the village spire, elevated above the trees of the park, and the blue smoke of the cottages rising almost amongst them, brought, forcibly, to his memory many an evening ramble that he had taken with Louisa in that direction; and he sickened at the thought that any thing could, for an instant, have obliterated the memory of these tranquil and truly felicitous moments. How often, at the close of day, had he directed her attention to the congregated movements of his garrulous friends, the rooks, who were now making their last gyrations over the great clump of firs before settling down for the night. What a contrast between the calm that pervaded this scene, and the noise, the bustle, the whirl of ideas that ever keep the mind in an almost half-intoxicated condition in the metropolis! Mr. Mordaunt felt its force, and inwardly cursed the instability and pliancy of his character, that permitted him to be drawn into the vortex of dissipation, which had made him lose sight of such a source of rational enjoyment. His meditations were disturbed by the opening of the drawing-room door, and he quickly turned round; but, instead of Louisa, whom he still, strangely enough, expected to

enter, it was an attendant, who informed him that she was ready to shew him to his apartment.

Frederick had scarcely completed his toilette before his friend Manvers entered to announce to him that, the second dinner-bell having rung, he thought it right, before he went down, to request that he would conceal as much as possible his feelings before Lady Mary; and to assure him that the Earl would not touch at all upon the object of his visit until he should have the pleasure of seeing him alone in the library. Mordaunt squeezed the hand of his friend, as an assent in the propriety of his request; and, without saying a word, followed him to the dining-room.

Lord Rochdale, although a whig in politics, yet was a man of high aristocratic feelings. He was tall, with a plain but expressive countenance, and wore his hair combed straight upon his forehead, which, and the plainness of his dress, gave him much of the appearance of a respectable yeoman: but his erect carriage, and his cold, distant manner, added to a slow, and rather affected correctness, in delivering himself in speaking, denoted at least his own opinion of his self-importance. He received Mr. Mordaunt more formally than usual. Lady

Mary, on the contrary, gave him her hand, and, holding up her withered cheek, asked his opinion of her looks.

“ Doctor P——, poor dear ! thinks me greatly improved ; he knows my constitution :—you must agree with me, Mr. Mordaunt, that is of the first importance.”

Frederick bowed his assent.

“ Had he known as much of poor Louisa— but how could he, she never was ill in her life before ; and when she began to droop, if she had consulted Doctor P——”

There is nothing in the world so annoying as a misplaced remark, especially when it refers to retrospective matters and reflects blame upon one who is suffering from the consequences : it is like an awkward man making way for you in a crowd, and stepping out of his own path, because he sees that you are in haste to get on ; but, in his eagerness not to jostle you, he places himself so directly in your way, that he is brought fairly into collision with you when he least intends it. Mr. Manvers saw the danger of allowing Lady Mary to proceed : his keen eye perceived the cloud that her remark had brought over the countenance of his friend : he therefore instantly changed the subject, and the dinner passed off without any occurrence worthy of notice.

The Earl,—who, although he had joined, as far as politeness demanded, in the conversation, yet, had preserved a marked distance of manner towards Frederick Mordaunt,—soon after Lady Mary withdrew, rose from table; and, as he left the room, bowing again formally to his young guest, said that he expected to have the pleasure of seeing him in the library in the course of the evening.

There was something in the manner of the Earl that led Mr. Mordaunt into a train of reflection not of the most agreeable kind. The tablet which memory held up to his mental eye, presented many a stain which he would have wished effaced; and not the least of his heart-corrodings, in the examination, was the apparent indifference which, in the thoughtless flexibility of his disposition, he had displayed towards Louisa Manvers. He felt, however, that his heart remained unchanged; and that whatever was the mutual understanding of each other's sentiments, nothing had been said or done that could authorize the Earl to talk to him, seriously, upon the subject: nevertheless, although he could not tell wherefore, yet, he dreaded the meeting that was about to take place. He was leaning, whilst these cogitations were passing through his mind, with his arm upon the chimney-piece, seem-

ingly gazing upon a crackling billet of wood which his friend Dudley had placed upon the fire ; for the autumnal evenings were already beginning to feel chilly ; when, without raising his eye—

“ Manvers,” said he, “ I don’t know why I should dread this interview with your father ?”

Mr. Manvers made no immediate reply, but seemed lost in thought.

“ You know,” continued Frederick, “ that, notwithstanding my frequent visits to the Park, I have seen the Earl but once before this evening ; and, whatever may have passed between Louisa and myself, I did not consider any communication to him necessary.”

Mr. Manvers raised his head. “ Frederick,” replied he, “ you have seen enough of my father to judge of his reserved manner ; it is not to you only that it is displayed ; be assured that I know as little of his sentiments on this subject as yourself ; but, believe me, that his apparent frigidity covers a warm heart.”

Mordaunt saw, in the look of his friend, enough to satisfy him of the sincerity of his remark : he merely rejoined, “ What can he have to communicate to me, that might not be said before you or even Lady Mary ?”

Mr. Manvers paused for a few moments, and then, taking his friend's hand, said, "I shall instantly resolve you upon that point; although, my dear Frederick, I fear the avowal of my interference in your affairs may draw down your censure upon me. You know that I have never been blind to the growing attachment between Louisa and yourself; on the contrary, my knowledge of it was the source of the highest gratification to me. About three or four months after you left us, however, I perceived a marked change in the dear girl's spirits: her vivacity vanished; she became pensive, absent, and silent; the bloom of health gradually left her cheek; her frame wasted; and, as a short cough succeeded, I saw too plainly that some anxiety, that was preying upon her mind, had roused into action the latent seeds of an hereditary disease, which, unfortunately for humanity, sweeps away the best part of our species. To be brief, Frederick, I gained her confidence, became the depository of her feelings, and soon acquired the knowledge of the cause of her malady. I endeavoured to sooth her suspicions of your indifference by assuring her of your constancy, and offering to write to you, and even to bring you down to

explain your conduct ; I also urged her strongly to consult, not Doctor P——, but a more able physician, who has lately settled in the neighbourhood. My object in both these points was defeated ; her self-respect,—for I shall not call it pride,—rejected the one, and a feeling that it was mental consolation, not medicine, that she required, made her firm in opposing the other. In the mean time, month passed on after month, until Parliament rose, and my father arrived at the Park, when he was so struck with the alteration in her appearance, that he immediately enquired what Doctor P—— thought of her case ; and having been informed that she had not seen him, and once only had consulted another physician, he immediately ascribed that unpardonable neglect, as he termed it, to the selfishness of Lady Mary. I saw that an immediate rupture would be the consequence ; and, indeed, so offended was my Aunt with the bare suspicion, that she was determined to leave the Park : there was only one mode of appeasing both parties left, namely, to state what I knew of the matter : and it was by the command of my father that I brought you here. He has expressed no displeasure at what you must allow might have justly roused the indignation of a less irritable

person : his sole object in wishing for the conference you dread, is to ascertain the real state of your feelings respecting poor Louisa ; for he cannot admit the idea, that her case is a hopeless one, to cross his mind."

" Nor can I"—said Frederick, grasping the hand of his friend, whilst his bosom was stung with the agony which the details that he had just heard were calculated to produce ;—" I cannot believe that it is utterly hopeless !"

How often do we find this to be the case ! When anxiety and apprehension direct the eyes of every one around the patient upon the countenance of the physician ; when hope has fled, and the fatal prognostic has been pronounced ; how often do we find Incredulity still retaining her sway over those most interested in the result ! They will not believe it possible, because their wishes, their imaginings, their anticipations, have all taken the opposite course ; they go on deceiving themselves even to the last moment ; and when the event actually takes place, they seem still to doubt whether it be not a dream. I have known an honest physician dismissed because the opinion he delivered was not a consolatory one.

" We are all," answered Mr. Manvers, " in the hands of Providence ; but my professional

duties, my dear friend, have brought too frequently the features of the closing stage of this intractable malady before me, to allow me to be mistaken: be assured that no secondary means—no human aid—can be of the smallest avail to poor Louisa.”

Mr. Mordaunt dropped his head upon the chimney-piece where he stood, and groaned deeply; and both remained for some minutes without speaking. At length, a gentle tap was heard at the door, which was immediately afterwards opened, and the lady's maid, entering, spoke low to Mr. Manvers, and retired.

“Wait at the door, Phœbe,” said Mr. Manvers; and, turning to Mr. Mordaunt, he informed him, that although he had persuaded Louisa to defer seeing him until to-morrow, yet she had sent to say that she found herself able for the interview, and she would pass a more tranquil night after it was over, than would be the case were it deferred until the morning. “Phœbe,—my dear fellow!—will convey you to the little parlour at the end of the picture-gallery, which is now Louisa's sitting-room.”

Mr. Mordaunt advanced to the door, then turned round for a moment, as if he wished to say something:—but, again, as if recollecting

himself, he opened the door and followed the servant, who stood ready, with a candle, to conduct him. Many were the reflections that rushed upon his mind as he traversed the passages and rooms that led to Miss Manvers' apartments. As the servant opened the door of the gallery, he was surprised to perceive that a curtain had been hung across it, and that a strip of carpeting stretched the whole length of the panelled oak floor that the Earl would never permit to be covered. He gazed carelessly, as he passed along, on the effigy of many a steel-clad chief and baron, and many a winning face and graceful form, disfigured by the dress of the periods in which the originals had flourished: among the modern portraits, his eye fell upon one which arrested his steps.

"Yes," said the servant, raising the light towards the picture, "that is the likeness of my dear, young, suffering mistress; but——"

Mordaunt felt what was likely to follow, and therefore waved her forward with his hand:—he entered the sick room before he was aware of it. A large screen, however, which he had missed from the dining-room, was placed within the door, and afforded him an opportunity of collecting himself. As he advanced from behind it, what met his eye?—Louisa!—but not

as he had left her,—seated on a sofa, propped up with pillows, emaciated, pale, and dying—yet, around her pallid lips, the same sweet smile, that ever welcomed those she loved, still played.

“ Phœbe, my dear,” said she, to the maid, as she extended her hand to Frederick, “ wait in the other room until I call you.”

Mr. Mordaunt, who had by this time advanced, took the proffered hand between his, and pressed it to his lips.

The thoughtlessness of Mordaunt’s general conduct, the flexibility of his disposition, the playfulness of his manner, might have led an ordinary observer to judge him severely, and to believe that, however acutely he might feel at the moment, any serious impression made upon him would be evanescent: but this was not the fact—the current of his real character ran deep and silent, the ripple that played upon its surface, and was varied by every breeze of pleasure, afforded no indication of the profundity of his genuine feelings: these were known only to the unfortunate who were able to appreciate their value from having experienced practically their influence upon his heart: he was even ashamed to acknowledge them to himself. If any heart could feel acutely and permanently on such an occa-

sion, it was that of Frederick Mordaunt: but, with all this, it cannot be denied that there is perhaps nothing in nature more opposite than the effects which disappointment in the tenderest of our attachments, in those anticipations connected with the sentiments of the heart, produces in the opposite sexes. On man the blow is felt like that of the fire of heaven, which scatters the monarch of the forest, overwhelming; and, were we to judge from its immediate effects, irretrievable: but the soul of man is selfish; it is open to the solace which the balm of consolation, like refreshing dew, pours upon the heart; his grief, however poignant, is transitory; he is ever directed by Hope to seek refuge in the future; he finds that the impressions, like most causes of mental pain, gradually lose their force; and as he again mingles with the world, that, however slowly, they may be at length wholly obliterated. Supported by these impressions, his animal spirits regain their spring and buoyancy; and the wretchedness which threatened his annihilation passes off like a summer's cloud, and is as utterly effaced from his memory as if it had never been. Not so woman. The nature of woman and her education modify greatly the effects of love, both upon her mind and

her corporeal frame : more dependent than man, and more influenced by kindness, sympathy, and generosity, her happiness is more mingled up also with her affections ; thence she makes greater and more generous sacrifices in love than are ever displayed by man ; and thence, also, when disappointment overthrows her cherished hope, and scatters her dearest anticipations, deep-rooted melancholy takes possession of her mind, and gradually acquires such force as to exclude all thoughts except those which are connected with it. Instead of friends or society affording any solace to her affliction, she shuns both, and seeks for solitude to brood over the causes that have wrecked her happiness : her health at length gives way, and she falls, like a tender and gentle flower before the nipping blast, never to rise again. She feels that the bosom into which her love was poured, has received all that she has to bestow : like the breath of the rose on the summer breeze, when gone, nothing can supply its place ; it is gone for ever. As her heart-corrodings, however, are studiously hidden from the eye of the world, she suffers in silence ; memory, constantly referring to the past, awakens the most painful reflections — the fond anticipations on which she reposed as a return of her tender, full,

and devoted love—her never-doubting confidence—have fled like the pictures of a dream ; she is suddenly awakened to the delusion—to the long lingering, undying pang of disappointment—the iron enters her soul ; she rejects all the comforts of Hope, and the future is to her as a blank. Too soon the tender tissue of her corporeal frame feels the shock which nothing can medicinal ; and as the nervous system loses its tone, if the powerful shield of Religion be not the support upon which the sufferer leans, Despondency may supervene, and lead to the most melancholy results. Such, happily, was not the state of Miss Manvers' mind ; her hope rested in heaven, and she looked forward for that repose there, which she well knew was not destined for her in this world.

The change in Louisa's appearance shocked Frederick beyond description, and immediately turned his thoughts inwards. Like the talisman of a dream, which brings the events of years into the space of a minute, every transaction that had occurred from the moment that he parted from her to the present, crowded upon his imagination : the gay and thoughtless society in which he had forgotten both himself and her,—the non-fulfilment of his solemn promises,—the resolutions of amendment that

were made only to be broken,—and the awful consequences of these, displayed in the person of one whom he most truly and affectionately loved,—brought upon him that sickness of heart which those only who have felt it can understand. He sat down on the sofa beside the poor invalid.

“Frederick!” said she, “I have long wished for this interview; and feared, greatly feared, as I could not seek it on my part, that it might be too long deferred. I feel truly grateful to the Earl, who has brought it about, unknown to me.”

Mr. Mordaunt remained for some moments silent; the hand which he had received was still locked in his, and his eyes riveted upon the ground: at length, recovering his self-possession—“Louisa, dearest Louisa!”—said he, “how can you ever forgive me?”

“Frederick!” replied she, as she gently placed her other hand upon his, “I have nothing to forgive: if my retired life has led me to form romantic notions of attachment, it would be unjust in me to imagine that you, moving in the vortex of the world, could be actuated by the same; and that the gaiety of the metropolis would not withdraw your mind, sometimes, from——” Here the effort to pro-

ceed, seemed too much for her exhausted frame, and she sunk back on the pillows, and breathed short. Mr. Mordaunt started from his reverie, and gazed upon her with the most intense anxiety.

“My beloved Louisa,” said he, “what can I do?—what can I get for you?” A deeper hectic had overspread her cheek; an obvious perspiration bedewed her forehead; and a tear started in the corner of her eye; yet the same sweet smile played around her mouth.

“Do not be alarmed, Frederick,” she replied, softly; “this exhaustion has often occurred of late; it will pass off again: I feel stronger and better since I have seen you. Oh! you can form no idea how I have longed for this meeting.” The faintness again returned, and again passed away.

Mr. Mordaunt saw that she could not sustain the interview, and he eagerly pressed her to permit him to withdraw, and to defer what she had to say until she was refreshed by a night’s repose.

“No, dearest Frederick!” said she, “do not leave me—I feel better—it has passed off: sit down.” Mr. Mordaunt took his seat on the sofa, close to her. “You may recollect, Frederick,” continued she, “on the evening before

we parted, during our walk among the rocks, at the bottom of the park—I think the moment is present now—” her eye which, as she was speaking, had been fixed upon the countenance of Mr. Mordaunt, with a benignity of expression that went to his soul, fell suddenly upon the ground as she proceeded—“ I then feared that the gaieties of the metropolis would make you forget the country.” Mr. Mordaunt sighed deeply. “ I do not blame you—with such a disposition as yours, dearest Frederick, it was natural ; and—” here she paused, and drew breath for a minute : she seemed to struggle with her feelings ; and, having mustered them, she then continued—“ I know your heart is unaffected—is the same—”

“ And ever will be, dearest Louisa !” exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, passing his arm gently round the waist of the poor invalid, who again seemed so exhausted with the exertion that she had undergone, that her head sunk on his shoulder. He applied his lips to her forehead. She raised her head, turned her eyes fondly upon him—smiled : at this instant a slight tremor shook her frame—a momentary convulsion affected her features—an expiratory sob followed, and she sank into his arms, apparently in another fainting fit. The manner

in which this occurred startled Mr. Mordaunt, and the more so, as he felt a cold clammy perspiration bedewing the hand which he held in his.

“Gracious Powers!” he exclaimed, as the truth broke upon him, and he gazed for an instant on the lifeless body in his arms:—a dizziness seized him; he became perfectly unconscious of every thing around him; and was only again awakened to sensibility by the piercing shriek of the servant, who, hearing what resembled a groan, became alarmed, and had ventured to enter the room. The first object which arrested the attention of Mr. Mordaunt, on recovering his consciousness, was the prostrate body of the servant, who had fallen down in a fit, overpowered by the horror of the scene. On raising his head from the footstool of Louisa, on which it had rested as he sunk down on fainting, his bewildered gazes next fell upon the body of the beloved being whose pure spirit had just departed. There was no distortion of body or features: the shoulders had fallen back on the pillows, one arm was stretched down by the side, the other slightly thrown across the chest; whilst a sweet and placid expression overspread the face, as if the poor sufferer had met the summons with a

grateful acquiescence, and had passed away on the bosom of gentle Sleep, rather than in the fatal grasp of the stern destroyer.

For a moment, the awful catastrophe to Mr. Mordaunt seemed like a dream recurring to his memory ; but the objects were before him—he was awake ; and the reality was too obvious to be doubted. As he regained his self-possession, a thousand corroding ideas pressed upon his mind : he stood there the self-condemned cause of the event that he had just witnessed—the murderer almost of one in whom all his genuine affections centered.

“ Merciful, but just God !” he exclaimed in his heart, as he knelt down by the side of the sofa, pressing the senseless hand of the departed saint to his lips, and bathing it with tears—
“ Merciful, but just God ! I submit myself to thy justice—strike—for the blow is merited.”

He paused—for his soul was overpowered ; and he merely evinced his resignation further by the fervour with which he added, “ thy will, not mine, be done !”

It is in such moments, when the mandate has gone forth, and the blow has been struck which severs the mortal from the immortal,—when the eye that beamed sympathy, and kindness, and love, is obscured for ever,—when the face,

whose features played with ever-varying expression, is fixed as that of a statue,—and the heart that beat with the warmest and best affections has ceased to pulsate,—that the mind acknowledges the frivolity of the world, and with an excursive range rests all its hopes upon futurity. Mr. Mordaunt gazed only for a few moments upon the still beautiful, although inanimate, form that lay before him, ere he summoned the family; but these few moments reflected the picture of many a past year, with all the weaknesses, the negligences, the errors, that too strongly marked the retrospect; and, in raising the curtain that veiled the future, they spoke so forcibly of what only could blot out the stain that sullied the record of his past career, that his resolution was already taken. He saw, on the tablet of the by-gone and the coming, that his destiny was changed; the future seemed to press upon the present, like the lightning flash that illuminates the darkness of midnight: he felt that the sword, which was then sheathed, was never again to be drawn by him; and that his future life must be dedicated to aid the salvation, not forward the destruction, of mortals.

It may seem unnatural that such thoughts should crowd upon the mind of Mr. Mordaunt

at such a moment ; but when a bereavement, such as he had sustained, occurs to one whose love is pure affection, unalloyed by any worldly or any other consideration,—to one whose imagination holds the reins both of his thoughts and actions, the mind follows the beloved object in its spiritual flight ; and if the heart has early felt a deep sense of religion, as was the case with Frederick Mordaunt, the soul becomes instantly intent on the reflection of what may forward a reunion with the pure spirit that has winged its flight to heaven ; and, whilst it feels chastened, and resigned to the will of its Maker, it commences unconsciously to consider the means of working that reformation which shall secure the end which it ardently desires. Frederick Mordaunt had felt no other attachment than that which was now broken ; its purity was such as is only known in earliest youth : his heart dreamt of no other. The affection of the beloved object of its devotion was equal to his own : neither ever admitted of any idea of change, either from time or circumstances ; and although Louisa's malady had been roused into fatal activity by the apparent neglect of Frederick, yet her bosom had never harboured a doubt of the strength and fidelity of his attachment. Frederick, on the other hand, al-

though he felt as if the "life's life" of his being had passed away,—that all which he had hoped, and desired, and idolized, on earth, had been torn from him,—and that partly by his own unaccountable folly,—yet he felt, also, that he could not accuse himself of any diminution of affection ; his heart was hallowed in its fidelity : and, when memory awakened him, and led him back to his moments of repose, from the whirl of thoughtless gaiety into which he had plunged, it displayed Louisa as the saint at whose shrine his heart had confessed its follies ; and in the confession he was consoled with the reflection, that, however he had permitted himself to be moulded to the habits of his associates, he had never sunk into the grossness of their vices. Still his follies were numerous ; and as there is always a voice ready to proclaim our failings, the tidings of the dissipated life of Frederick Mordaunt had too frequently reached the ears of Louisa. She heard them in silence ; but as she felt conscious that her dissolution was rapidly approaching, she was anxious, if possible, to make some impression upon his character by an appeal to his heart, which she knew was right ; and she conceived that the effort, however much it might cost her, would be successful proportionably to the depth of his

attachment. Disease often strengthens the moral sympathies ; and, when the patient knows that the fatal issue is inevitable, there is a decision in acting which is seldom witnessed under other circumstances. But, whilst this conviction adds vigour to the mind, the body suffers ; the excitement it produces is succeeded by a state of corresponding collapse, and the most injurious, even fatal, consequences, as in the present instance, follow.

It is unnecessary to describe the scene which the assembling of the family produced. The Earl, although he had seen the danger that hung over his favorite niece, had no conception that it was so close at hand. The expression of his grief was deep and sincere. He was a proud man, and reserved to strangers ; but his heart was susceptible of the best and the tenderest impressions. The distress which he experienced was augmented by the reminiscence which the event produced : he beheld renewed the catastrophe that had obscured all the anticipated brightness of his existence, when the beloved partner of his bosom lay before him as his niece now did, the victim of the same irremediable disease, which, alas ! carries off the best and the most amiable portion of our race. The Earl had felt his bereavement with that

resignation which becomes a Christian,—a silent acquiescence in the dispensation of divine wisdom. His grief had not been of that immoderate kind which exhausts itself in the indulgence of it; but it had stamped upon him a settled melancholy, and although he knew that repining would not restore what he had lost, yet, his nature was not adapted for stoicism; and, therefore, it was long before he could give his attention even to the ordinary duties of life. As all things, however, are mutable, time, which cures many evils, was beginning to lighten the spirits of the afflicted nobleman, when this blow re-opened his wound; and he felt again the iron hand of Grief pressing upon his heart. He hung over the body, and gave vent to a flood of silent tears; but his groans were deep and audible; and he would have sunk under the intensity of his feelings, if his son, whose equanimity of mind and Christian fortitude upheld him amidst this afflicting scene, had not supported and led him from the room.

It is unnecessary to say that, although the grief of Lady Mary was sincere,—for she really loved her niece, as much as she could any human being, except herself,—yet, it displayed itself in that turbulence which seldom exhibits

itself when the heart is really deeply wounded, —when the sacrifice is submitted to because it is required by Him who has a right to demand it, and which calls forth from the wounded spirit the conforming aspiration, “thy will be done.” Lady Mary’s burst of grief was at first reasonable, because its cause was really felt; but she was too much the creature of habit to allow natural feeling to predominate: she therefore soon recollected that the degree of sorrow should always be proportionate to the cause; and, as this fully merited an hysterical, so she fell into one; during which she was carried to bed, and attended by Dr. P——; remained in a pitiable condition for a week; then slowly improved in the course of another; assumed her place at table at the termination of the third; and had the gratification of talking for a month of the misery of too susceptible feelings,—of the shock which her “poor nerves” had sustained,—and the extraordinary skill of dear Doctor P—— in restoring them again to their condition of vibrating repose.

Mr. Mordaunt, who had been persuaded by his friend Manvers to leave the room, on the assembling of the family there, no sooner found himself alone in his apartment, than he became fully sensible of the extent of his bereavement;

and, completely overpowered, he threw himself upon his bed, almost in a state bordering on despair. It was only the kindly pressure of the hand of his friend Manvers upon his, and the sound of his well-known voice, uttering the words "my dear Mordaunt," that again made him conscious of the necessity of subduing feelings that almost threatened to overthrow his reason. Mr. Manvers raised him from the bed, and, having led him to a chair, seated himself beside him, and endeavoured to pour into his wounded bosom that healing balm which religion alone affords:—that blessed resignation which philosophy, much as it professes, labours in vain, by all the weight of its most convincing arguments, to bestow.

"I am fully aware, my dear friend," said Mr. Manvers, "that on none of us has the blow fallen with such overwhelming force as upon you; but, probably, I may venture to say that none can so completely appreciate its extent as myself. I know the virtues that adorned the character of my cousin; and I have witnessed their practical application in many an act of genuine sympathy, kindness, and charity to those whom misfortune had overtaken, and left to depend solely on the mercy of Providence, bereaved of their

only earthly protector, and utterly devoid of any means of support. The widow has shared the fulness of her benevolence, and taught her orphan child to couple her name with those blessings that the first lisping accents of the infant implore from the divine Dispenser of all things. She was young, and beautiful, and good, my dear friend ; and she has been summoned in the flower of her years : but we are truly told that there is no certain happiness upon earth. Believe me, Mordaunt, that for “her to die was gain ;” and be assured that, afflictive as the dispensation is, it is not only wisdom in us to acquiesce, but it is selfish, and even sinful, to repine. One consolation should tranquillize your mind :—the assurance that, to such as redemption have awakened to a reliance on the Redeemer, death is merely the transition from this world to that of eternal bliss ; where there is no change, no parting, no sorrow ; but where goodness, and virtue, and truth, are immutable and eternal.”

Mr. Mordaunt said nothing, although his heart acquiesced in the sentiments that had been so feelingly uttered : he felt as if a load were removed from his bosom, and, raising his friend’s hand, pressed it to his lips, in grateful acknowledgment of the comfort he experienced.

Mr. Manvers had too much discretion to pursue the conversation further at this time ; and, having obtained a promise that Frederick would retire to bed, left him to seek that repose which, fortunately, often terminates a fit of immoderate grief—the sleep of pure exhaustion.

CHAPTER V.

“ Silent is the tongue to whose accents we surrender the soul, and to whose language of friendship and affection we wished to listen for ever. Beamless is the eye, and closed in night, which looked serenity, and sweetness, and love. The face that was to us as the face of an Angel, is mangled and deformed ; the heart that glowed with the purest fire, and beat with the best affections, is now become a clod of the valley.”—LOGAN.

“ All her affections, like the dews on roses,
Fair as the flowers themselves, as sweet and gentle.”

BRACMONT and FLETCHER.

THE village of Rochdale was situated in the park, embosomed in a wood clothing the gentle acclivities of two hills, that formed a narrow valley, through which a small but limpid stream, descending from the neighbouring mountains, brattled over a pebbly channel in many a devious winding, and almost surrounded the cleared spot upon which the village stood. It was not deep enough to drown a child ; but it served for the children to paddle in, under the eyes of their grandams, as they sat at their cottage doors, enjoying the warmth

of the summer's afternoon sun, listening to the music of its gurgling water, and the merry peals of the infant bands,—pleasing sounds! that restore the picture of by-gone days, and shed gleams of pleasure on the evening hour of a life of labour, not wholly unalloyed with anxiety and care: for “the world,” as Cowper has beautifully remarked, “upon which we close our eyes at night, is never the same with that on which we open them in the morning.”

The village consisted of about twenty cottages, each apart amidst its little garden, without the arrangement that constitutes a street, but surrounding an open space that served for one. On one side, almost close to the streamlet, rose the church, if it might be called such; which consisted chiefly of the cemetery of the Manvers, of the Earl's family pew, about a dozen pews for the tenants of the Rochdale estate, and some thirty benches in the aisle for the villagers. I recollect visiting the little fane some years since, when no dream of ever feeling interested in its history had crossed my imagination. It was to examine a beautifully sculptured monument, that had been executed in Italy, to the memory of one of the Lady Rochdales, of whom it was a correct likeness; a gem of art, not erected to gratify the vanity of the survivor,

or to excite the gaze of the stranger, but the sincere tribute of one who visited it frequently, to renew the felicity that had been snatched from him, by the contemplation of this memorial of her who had conferred it when alive. Small as it was, Rochdale church had a spire, which overtopped the trees, and pointed out the existence of the village, which was otherwise hidden as a nest in the forest ; and which, indeed, of all villages that I have ever seen, might have been designated “ the nest of peace, the harbour of repose.” Alas ! I say might have been ; for, the last time I visited it, a rail-road was in progress along the valley, the streamlet was nearly choked up, the village laid open by the felling of the trees that were its former screen, and a large brick house, with the sign of the Red Cow, reared close to the church.

The villagers of Rochdale were as simple as their hamlet ; and, except in a few improvements in the education of their children, which Mr. Manvers had introduced, and which did not supplant the village school-mistress, they had undergone little change for half a century. Although not ten miles from a large manufacturing town, yet the music of the spinning-wheel was still heard in its cottages ; the young men still met to enjoy an evening game at

cricket on the village green, which had not been sacrificed to the heartless enactments of an enclosure bill: there was as yet no alehouse to muddle their heads and to brutalize their manners; and the corruptions of the Cotton mill—that sink of vice, and destroyer of social felicity—had not defiled its humble roofs. The only change of consequence was a little parochial library; and a music society, which met once a week, superintended by Mr. Manvers himself. The wants of the villagers were few; and what their labour was unequal to procure, was supplied by the Earl, and the flourishing tenantry of his domain.

It was in this little, secluded spot, that the benevolence of Louisa's affectionate nature expended its sympathies. She regulated their inclinations, and trained to their domestic duties the mothers, without interfering in their private concerns: she was the chief monitor of the intellectual culture of their children; the doctress of the sick; the comforting angel of the afflicted; and, whilst she left their religious instruction to her cousin, she was careful in enforcing that the little ones should learn its first rudiments at the mother's knee; and there receive impressions which, as they are never forgotten, might produce at least

wholesome habits in after life, if not a richer harvest of good works. When reproof was required by either parent or child, it was given with a gentleness that went home to the heart, never offended the obdurate, nor wounded the most sensitive. It was delightful to observe, as she lifted the cottage latch, the pleasure that beamed in every eye; the chair eagerly wiped with the matron's apron; the respectful welcome; the feeble efforts of the superannuated grandsire to catch the sound of her voice; the pressure of the little ones to touch her mantle, or to have their little curling heads patted with her hand; and the pride of their mothers in seeing them thus noticed. Such were the villagers of Rochdale, who had assembled to witness the last duties performed over the remains of one whom they had loved during her life, and whose death they now deeply and sincerely lamented.

The stone that covered the entrance to the family vault, which had not been moved since the interment of Lady Rochdale, was again lifted from its bed, and laid open the humiliating aspect of the gloomy cells where mouldered the ruins of many a noble generation; some whose high faculties filled a page in the history of their country, and who had been crowned with

honors, but now lay companions of the worm ;— as if the breath of life had never animated their frames,—marking the dissolution which awaits mortality. In the morning the younger portion of the villagers had flocked to gaze into the vault, with feelings of silent awe ; whilst the aged labourer was observed leaning upon his staff, meditating on the scene that brought to his eye of sense the final destiny to which he was fast approaching. Now all were congregated, silently awaiting to join in that solemn service which separates the dead from the living world, —to offer to the memory of the departed the last tribute of gratitude they could bestow—a tear and a sigh of unaffected sorrow.

As the funeral procession approached the church, and entered the porch of the sacred edifice, and the Vicar, with a firm and unflinching voice, began the solemn service—“ I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord,”—all was silence and reverent attention : but, when he repeated that sentence so aptly selected from the book of Job—“ the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,”—a suppressed sigh spontaneously burst from the bosoms of the assembled people. It was one of those instinctive expressions of the feelings with which reasoning has nothing to do,—which

speaks of the depth of our affliction, and indicates that the resignation to the blow is only submitted to because it cannot be resisted : it may be an indication of human weakness ; but I cannot help thinking it honorable to our nature ; for although the Christian believes that “ blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,” yet, the heart, in the depth of its distress, feels that it cannot at once loosen the cords that bound its affections ; it demonstrates that the truth, however undeniable, is forced upon it :—the dispensation is borne, because it must be borne.

The voice of Mr. Manvers was clear and full, admirably suited to render duly impressive the sublime and solemn service in which he was engaged. The rough tenantry, not less than the relations of the family, were melted into tears ; the sobbings of the women were audible and deep ; and the infants in their arms and by their sides gazed up in the faces of their mothers, as if to enquire the reason of a grief which their guileless and vacant bosoms happily could not feel. Besides those of the Vicar, the eyes of two individuals only remained dry. Of these, Mr. Mordaunt was one ; the other was a man of military port, who gazed upon the ceremony with the deepest interest, and whose folded arms and

stern look seemed as if intended to cover feelings which he considered derogatory to his calling. The bearing of Mr. Mordaunt was equally severe: he stood a little apart from the mourners, his cheek rested on his hand, his expanded brow full of thought, his eye bent forward, and his lips firmly compressed,—a noble and dignified picture of rigid, yet constrained abstraction:—and it was only when the withered hand of the old sexton threw the dust upon the coffin, as it was lowered into the vault, and his friend pronounced the awful words—“earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ,”—that a quiver of his lip and a suppressed sigh demonstrated that his heart responded with the feelings of those around him.

The service was ended; every one pressed forward to bestow, as it were, a last look on the remains of the beloved object, now consigned to the dust: children, some bright with the flush of health,—some the destined prey of the destroyer, and borne to the spot on the bosoms of doating mothers;—vigorous youths, who had put the evil day far from them, careless of the arrow which might level them also with the worm;—blooming maidens, and a few who,

like her whom they mourned, were the victims of disease, and were only lingering for a little in a mere prolongation of the line of their sufferings;—the sturdy rustic, full of health;—the aged and the feeble, who had lived to carry the young and the vigorous to the grave, and who calmly waited the summons which was to call them to a long repose:—all looked for a moment into the tomb, and then slowly departed, some to forget, others to profit by the lesson; but the greater number, at least of the villagers, to brood over the irreparable loss that they had sustained in the gentlest, the kindest, the best of benefactors.

Mr. Mordaunt, like a statue of concentrated, yet tranquil grief, moved not from the spot, till his friend, placing his arm within his, conducted him into the vestry room. It was then that the restraint he imposed upon himself gave way; there were no strangers there to witness the depth of his feelings,—no eyes to criticize, but those who could justly appreciate them: he therefore fell upon the bosom of his friend, and allowed Nature to take her course. Mr. Manvers poured into his afflicted heart every consolation which friendship and religion could suggest. Mordaunt felt their force, and re-

turned to Rochdale House more tranquillized than he expected ever to have felt.

Before leaving the church, supposing that every one had departed, Frederick was anxious to descend, for a few minutes, into the cemetery. The disposition of Mr. Mordaunt was of that singular texture, that although he was aware that he could not withstand the impulse of feeling, whatever feature it might assume, yet, he had not resolution adequate to withdraw from its influence. It was this failing which had hurried him into many of the follies he had committed; and had his heart not been untainted, and the early principles implanted by his mother not been deeply rooted in it, he would have been precipitated from those precipices on the brinks of which he had too often stood.

On entering the church, the two friends were astonished to observe the military person, already alluded to, standing, with his arms crossed upon his breast, at the opening of the vault, in an attitude of the most abstracted meditation. He was a tall, powerful man, with a sternness of expression, heightened by a moustache on his upper lip; and although there was nothing that bespoke an aristocratic origin, yet, his expression was intellectual,

and there was an air of command in his eye that seemed prophetic of a higher station than he evidently at present filled. He looked up as the two friends advanced, then, turning shortly on his heel, walked slowly out of the church.

“What a strange circumstance!” said Mr. Manvers. “What can that reprobate Richard Atkinson be doing here?”

“Who is that person?” enquired Mordaunt; the name and his friend’s remark having escaped his attention.

“He is a man of some talent, and of considerable acquirements for the station from which he sprung,” replied Mr. Manvers. “He is the son of one of my father’s tenants:—his poor mother was a clever, well-educated woman, who made a low marriage, but to whose maternal care he is deeply indebted. He turned out, however, a sad reprobate; would do nothing; thought himself very superior to his rank in life; and would have been infallibly ruined, if the Earl had not procured for him a cornetcy in a dragoon regiment. What can have brought him here at this time?”

As they left the church, Mr. Manvers asked the Beadle, who was waiting to lock the door,

whether it was not Cornet Atkinson who just passed out ?

“ Yea,” replied the Beadle, “ it was he, sir. I asks him what he were doing here ? ‘ Nothing you can understand,’ said he, giving me one of his contentious looks. ‘ Have you seen the Vicar ?’ said I. ‘ Yea,’ says he : ‘ what then ? ‘ Did he give you a rating ?’ saving your honor’s presence, says I. ‘ Old man,’ says he, ‘ you know me not. The Vicar and the Earl too will find me as proud as those who live in palaces.’ And with that he sulked off.”

“ It is true,” said Mr. Manvers, as the friends walked on, “ this singular man has some of our blood in his veins : his mother was very distantly related to my poor mother. The Earl would have assisted in forwarding him in life ; but his indiscreet conduct, his conceit, and pride, have stood in the way of his advancement. His talents, however, are considerable, and will either raise him in the world, or drive him to some bold act of irretrievable ruin.”

Frederick made no reply ; circumstances, which I may mention on another occasion, had enabled him to form an estimate of Atkinson’s character : he knew more of him than his friend ; but he said nothing.

Mr. Mordaunt remained a fortnight at Rochdale House, and received every kindness and attention, which hospitality and sympathy could suggest, from every member of the family. Even Lady Mary forgot her own ailments in her anxiety “to cheer his spirits and promote his comfort.’

But the corroding agony of Mr. Mordaunt’s bereavement was yet to come. Whilst his mind was occupied with summoning up the fortitude which his presence at the funeral demanded, little space was left for other reflections; and, as he had elevated his courage to the performance of that last duty, he felt comparatively calm. The tomb was, however, scarcely closed, ere the image of the beloved object which it had just received filled “the eye and prospect of his soul,” riveted his every thought, crept “into his study of imagination,” and shed a pensive melancholy over the mourner, that he would not have resigned for all that the world could confer.

A short distance above the village, was a little secluded den, formed by a turn in the river, which there laved an abrupt rock on one side, whilst, on the other, spread a small flat of verdant moss, overshadowed by a broad projecting oak, which sprung from the crevices of a crag

that rose behind it, parting the leafy screen which covered the base of the hills, and fairly shut in the spot from all observation. There, daily, Frederick instinctively directed his steps; and, stretched upon the sward, gave the reins to his fancy, and reviewed the picture of that life, which, although it seemed as a dream, yet, he could not banish the idea, had been shortened, and, with its close, his own future enjoyment of life extinguished, by folly on his part, which now appeared most unaccountable. In these moments, Louisa seemed to stand before him "more moving delicate," more lovely, more intellectual; her eyes beaming more tender sympathies; and her voice attuned to sweeter music than even when she lived. It was neither weakness nor the spell of superstition that bound Frederick Mordaunt in these reveries; it was the conviction of the happiness which he had thrown from him; and, in pondering over the retrospect, he fortunately received a lesson of practical value, from which his after life derived all its virtue, its equanimity, its consistency, and the wholesome spirit of genuine religion that gave the impulse to its actions.

Under the influence of these sentiments, Mr. Mordaunt determined to quit the army. He

wrote to his father for leave to sell his commission, and he suggested that, with its proceeds, he should finish his terms at Cambridge, previous to taking his Master's degree, and then enter the Church. The Earl had kindly promised him a living; and this being the case, the Baronet had no hesitation in acceding to his son's proposals.

But there was another individual who felt as acutely as Mr. Mordaunt the death of Louisa Manvers; namely, the identical rude soldier who had been stigmatized by the term *reprobate* by the Vicar. In a visit to his father, Cornet Atkinson had several times encountered Miss Manvers in her visits of benevolence to the village, and had conceived, and cherished in silence, a hopeless passion for her, which he was sanguine enough to dream might some time or other be realized. This had wrought a wonderful change on the habits of the young man; he had become steady, and was every day gaining friends: indeed, it was already in contemplation to appoint him to the adjutancy of his regiment. The blow, however, which he had just received in the late event, had awakened again many of the strong but evil passions in his bosom, and contributed to tincture his future life in a manner directly the opposite of its influence on that of Mr. Mordaunt.

The new character which Frederick displayed on his return to Saint John's excited much speculation amongst his former associates who still remained there, and attracted the attention of the heads of the University in a manner greatly to his credit. His name was the first upon the tripos of the ear; and Mr. Mordaunt was now as highly distinguished a scholar, as he had been formerly noted as one of the gay and most frivolous idlers amongst the gowmsmen. His society was coveted and sought after; but the trace of melancholy, which his mind had not been able to shake off, led him to seek retirement, and devote himself to study to an extent which was evidently affecting his health. He took his degree with that distinction which his friends had anticipated from his exertions; and immediately set about preparing himself for the sacred office which he was ambitious to fill. Every previous step having been taken, Mr. Mordaunt had no difficulty in obtaining a title for holy orders, and he soon afterwards had an interview with the Bishop of the Diocese respecting his ordination. On being ushered into the library of the reverend Prelate, what was his astonishment to recognize in him an old tutor of Saint John's; and, as Frederick was sensible that he was fully acquainted with the dissipated life that he had formerly led at Cambridge, the

recognition was an event certainly calculated to awaken some apprehensions of disappointment to his anticipations on the present occasion. The look of the Bishop was grave, but not austere.

“Mr. Mordaunt,” said he, as he requested him to be seated, “I trust that you have seriously considered the nature of the holy functions which you are desirous of assuming; that you are not entering into the Church merely with the view of your advancement in the world; as a profession, chosen without a due consideration of the awful responsibility which every one incurs who becomes a Christian pastor?”

Frederick had no hesitation in assuring the reverend Prelate of the sincerity of his intentions; and in a month afterwards he was inducted to one of the best livings in Westmoreland, on the banks of one of the most romantic of its lakes, and a spot admirably suited to the tone of his mind and feelings.

The accident which, ten years afterwards, introduced Mr. Mordaunt to the family of Colonel Standard, effected a change in his mind that could not have been anticipated. He saw, or fancied that he saw, a striking resemblance between Caroline Ashton and the beloved being who had been so long the object upon

which all his thoughts and reminiscences had centred. In person and appearance there was certainly some resemblance: the beauty of both was of that ethereal kind which we admire in the angels on the canvass of the immortal Guido; light, aerial, and brilliant, with eyes beaming intelligence. The features of Caroline Ashton however, were more flexible than those of Louisa Manvers, more animated, varying with each turn of thought—the visible impress of her soul. Her character was as truly feminine, tender, and sympathetic; yet it was not wholly devoid of ambition,—a quality which did not belong to that of Miss Manvers. The mind of the latter, also, although it was susceptible of the utmost cultivation, and had been improved by every suggestion of her cousin and Mr. Mordaunt, yet still displayed the defect of early education: that of Caroline Ashton, on the contrary, had received the highest tuition; and she aspired to elevate it by exercise to an ideal height of intellectual superiority which she imagined to belong to her sex. Louisa Manvers, with all the endearing qualities of her nature, was truly, in every respect, a mere woman; Caroline Ashton, had she been born in the sphere of nobility, would have conferred brilliancy on rank: as she was, she won

the hearts and swayed the minds and opinions of all around her : and, as her bosom was fitted only to expend its love upon one to whom she could look up and venerate, so she had rejected alliances that her relations had regarded desirable and advantageous for a young lady, whose sole fortune was her beauty, the sweetness of her disposition, and a highly tutored intellect. These were qualities sufficient to rouse again the dormant affections of Frederick Mordaunt, and his heart once more opened itself to that passion against which he had supposed it closed for ever.

Such, gentle reader, is the history of the Reverend Frederick Mordaunt, which the Editor has thought it right to transfer to this part of the Journal. He regards this chronicle, as far as respects the arrangement of its materials, as much under his control as if it were his garden in which he might plant an apple tree here, a gooseberry bush there, and a cabbage in another place, merely because it pleases his fancy : —and, having said this much for the benefit of posterity, he intreats thee, gentle reader, to return to the close of Chapter third, and listen to the clergyman's tale.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CLERGYMAN'S TALE.

“ The Minstrel's table was with viands spread,
 His cup was fill'd, though all the rest were dry ;
 Not on the floor was made the Minstrel's bed,
 He got the best Kincairgy could supply.”
 MADOR OF THE MOOR.

THE village of Killin is one of the most romantic in the Highlands of Scotland. It is situated in the centre of a small amphitheatre of hills clothed with hanging woods, among which the rugged front of a grey rock, tinted with lichens, is seen occasionally projecting, and backed with stupendous mountains. The river Acharn, a branch of the boisterous Dochart, flows with a placid current close to the village, and around the base of a green mount, crowned

with noble oaks, which shade the places of sepulture of the family of Mac Nab of Mac Nab, once possessed of extensive domains in that neighbourhood. The village itself is clean and neat ; partly embosomed among trees, and surrounded with meadows of the most refreshing green, rising high upon the declivities of the tufted hills. The vale, which opens towards Loch Tay, rich in pasturage and wood, descends with a gentle inclination to the margin of the lake. There is a delightful repose, a sabbath-day stillness in the scene, which harmonizes with the mind in certain conditions of the feelings, and peculiarly accorded with my sentiments when I last visited it.

My friend Campbell, with whom I was residing, and whose hospitable mansion is situated in a beautiful ravine, near the entrance into Glen Dochart, is one of those rare characters, who, profiting by a liberal education, and a knowledge of the world, derived from visiting most of the courts of Europe, carry into retirement all those intellectual resources which enable us to repel ennui and become independent of society ; and who, at the same time, retain the natural simplicity and generous feelings of early years. His wife is not less ac-

complished and amiable; and, as they have one child only, remaining of a large family, to whose education much of their time is devoted, the years of this happy couple roll on in that peaceful bliss which appears to me a foretaste of a future and a better state of existence.

Among other excursions, we frequently ascended Ben Lawers, in search of the rare cryptogamic treasures of that elevated region. On one of these occasions we had just returned, exhausted and fatigued; for although Campbell is not a botanist, yet he had entered enthusiastically into my pursuits; and, equally with myself, had forgotten the hour of dinner, and was warned of the necessity of returning home only by the lengthened shadows of the rocks and the approach of twilight. It was almost dark when we entered the house; and, whilst my friend was engaged in settling some transactions with one of his tenants, I had thrown myself across two of the chairs in the parlour, close to a cheerful peat fire, which his excellent wife had ordered to be lighted, justly anticipating that it would prove no unacceptable addition to the mutton-ham, cold venison pasty, and cup of good tea, which she had prepared for our refreshment, when my attention

was roused by the notes of a violin, touched with more musical skill and delicacy of expression than I expected to have heard in that part of the island. My friend's little girl, an interesting child of eight years of age, to whom I was naming the wild flowers of a bouquet which I had gathered for her, observing that my attention was arrested, carelessly exclaimed:—

“It is only wandering Willy playing a tune to the lasses; maybe papa will bring him in, for he kens that Willy likes a glass of pure Glen Lievit; and he says that the auld man plays the ‘Land o’ the leal’ better than any other fiddler that he has ever heard, except Niel Gow, who was dead long before I was born.”

“And who is wandering Willy?” said I, holding a flower of the *Parnassia*, which I was about to name, between my fingers.

“Oh! he is a hump-backed body, who comes now and then to get a shilling and a glass of whiskey;—but what is the name of that beautiful flower, Mr. Mordaunt?”

“It is called the flower of Parnassus, Maria,” said I: and I was proceeding to explain the peculiarity of the plant, when Campbell, who had entered the room as his

little girl was describing the musician, took up the discourse, and said—

“That flower, Maria, is like your friend Willy, more valued by those qualified to judge of its merits, than many of the more flaunting flowers of the garden, but unnoticed by ordinary observers, from being the production of the wildest and most sequestered glens.”

The child gazed on the face of her father, and then replied,—“Like Willy, papa!—he is an ugly, deformed body, unlike any thing that I have ever seen: his chin almost touches his knees; his legs are as crooked as cousin Robert’s shinty; and his arms are so long that he can almost touch his heels with his hand, when he stands upright.”

Her father could not suppress a smile at the vividness of the child’s description; which, however, was checked by her mother remarking,—“that young people should not give such licence to their tongues, and that Willy, poor and deformed as he was, possessed some qualities which richly compensated for the disgusting deformity of his person.”

The interest which my worthy host and his amiable wife seemed to take in this itinerant minstrel, greatly excited my curiosity, not only

to see him, but to enquire into his history; and I readily obtained my friend's permission to invite Willy into the parlour, as soon as the tea equipage should be removed.

The evening was one of those which are not unfrequent in the Highlands, after the calmest days,—rainy and boisterous. The weather was delightful, clear and sunny, in the forenoon and afternoon; but it began to break before we left Ben Lawers; round the summit of which, a few cloudy wreaths were curling as we descended from its heights; and we were overtaken by two or three scuds of rain before we reached my friend's hospitable mansion. It was the anticipation of the storm, which now raged, that had secured to us the honour of a visit from Willy; for, as we afterwards learned, the old man was proceeding to Killin, where he understood a number of English gentlemen had taken quarters, for the advantage of grouse-shooting; and Willy declared, that he had had ample proof of the “superior taste o’ thae Englishers in music;” and he might have added, of the greater weight of their purses. The rain, which was now driven against the house by violent gusts of wind, battered loudly on the casements, inspiring a higher feeling of the comfort derived from our blazing peat fire,

and the hissing urn on the tea table ; while, in each short interval of calm, the jingle of Willy's fiddle, and the noisy mirth of the servants reaching our ears, convinced us that the comforts of the parlour were more than reciprocally felt in the kitchen.

“Do you hear them, Mr. Mordaunt,” said Maria. “The mad queans ! they are dancing the fling to one of Willy's best strarthspeys : and I should not be surprised if Tam Macalister be among them :—puir daft creature ! he always comes with the flower of Parnassus ;” continued she, glancing archly at her father.

“And who is Tam Macalister, Maria,” said I ; for my residence in the Highlands had not been sufficiently long to make me acquainted with its public characters.

“He is another of Papa's flowers of Parnassus,” replied the child, pleased with the opportunity of playing upon, what she considered, a most incongruous comparison.

“There you are mistaken, Maria,” said her father. “Poor Tam is only a follower of Willy, who, like other great men of the mountains, cannot travel without his tail.”

Mrs. Campbell, who was less disposed to jest than either her husband or my friend Maria, mildly interposed, and informed me, that Tam

was one of those harmless idiots, of which one or two are generally found at large in many of the towns in the north; and who, having no fixed abode, range about, supported by the lairds, farmers, and cottagers; and find a temporary home, if not a welcome, wherever they happen to be at the close of the day.

“Poor Tam,” continued the amiable narrator, “is as idiotic as he can well be, but less mischievous than the majority of his species: and although his parents, who died when he was a lad, were never able to settle him to any fixed employment, yet, for many years of his life, he made himself useful in some manner to those who were kind to him; and has always enjoyed the reputation of good-heartedness and honesty. A few years ago, he fell from a considerable height, and since that time has certainly become more idiotic. He was always passionately fond of music, has a melodious voice, and has lately attached himself so closely to Willy, that where the one is, you are certain of finding the other.”

“Yes,” said Maria, “they are called the Gowk and the Titlin. Tam carries the fiddle and rosin-bag for Willy, and takes care of him when he gets fou; for you see Tam never

drinks anything stronger than milk, and calls glen-lievit the Diel's brue."

"Tam has always been a privileged person in speech," said Mrs. Campbell, "and many of his remarks have much point. Indeed, he appears to be a natural production of one of those beings who were formerly found in Courts, but of whom many, in my humble opinion, were more knaves than fools, artificial compounds of idleness and roguery."

"Nay, my dear Elizabeth!" remarked Campbell, interrupting her, "they were the only honest retainers of the Court, the only persons who could speak truth without giving offence; and who, like mirrors, exposed obsequiousness and flattery in their true colours, whilst, not unfrequently, they were the means of advancing modesty and merit, which might have been left to pine in the shade, unnoticed and unknown. But 'Tam, as you have remarked, is a natural production; and to convince my friend Mor-daunt that he can say a good thing, I may only notice his reply to the schoolmaster, who foolishly enough asked him, one day, how long a man could live without brains. Tam, laying hold of the Dominie's button, and gazing for a few moments in his face, replied, 'how long

hae ye lived, Dominie?" But perhaps, my dear Mordaunt, you would wish to see both of our eccentrics? Come, Maria, bring out the glen-lievit; send away the tea equipage, and introduce your friends Willy and Tam."

"Now, Mr. Mordaunt, you shall see Papa's flower of Parnassus," said the child, who sprang forward to obey the request of her father; and, having placed the liquor-stand, containing Willy's favorite beverage, on the table, and rung the bell for the servant to remove the tea things, she darted out of the room. In the interval of her absence, my friend replenished the grate with some fresh peats, Mrs. Campbell placed her work-box on the table, and I rose from my lounging position to receive the two singular beings who were about to be presented to me, and whom I anticipated as additions to the other local wonders of this interesting district.

In a few minutes the door opened, and Maria entered, leading Willy by the hand, while she averted her head to conceal a titter which she could not restrain; and although I had pictured in my imagination an excess of deformity from Maria's description, yet I had formed no idea like the extraordinary caricature of humanity who now walked into the parlour. He was a

dwarf, being scarcely four feet in height; and, as he seemed all head and legs, his appearance was inconceivably grotesque. His head, which, if magnitude were to direct our judgment, was certainly intended for a man of more than ordinary stature, had settled down between his shoulders, but, nevertheless, was well formed. The forehead was broad and elevated, furnished with large, shaggy, grey eyebrows, which shaded a pair of keen, penetrating eyes, deeply sunk in their sockets; the nose was rather long, moderately aquiline, with full, dilated nostrils; the mouth wide, but expressive; displaying, when opened, a set of frightful, decayed teeth; and the chin pointed, curved upwards, and a little awry, probably from its long habit of resting upon the base of the fiddle. His face exhibited the wrinkles of advanced age, but it was ruddy and healthful; and as, owing to the great breadth of the forehead and the capacity of the cranium, it was almost triangular, its expression, even when the features were at rest, was that of great comicality. The entire head, as I have already stated, was depressed between the shoulders, resting partly on the hump of his back, and partly on his left shoulder. His body, if the shapeless mass which supported his head could be called body, was so much sunk in at the

chest that his chin appeared to rest upon the lower part of his stomach, and his legs, which were inordinately long for his stature, although they were partly covered with his kilt, yet, were curved, as Maria had stated, in two opposite directions. The dress of the minstrel, even to his stockings, was of tartan. His plaid was thrown across his breast, or rather stomach, and over his left shoulder as if to add to its already disproportionate elevation ; and, on the right side of his head, with a few grey locks issuing beneath it, was stuck his bonnet, decked with a heron's feather, the appropriate symbol of his clan. He carried his cremona under his left arm ; and, as he entered the room, he touched his bonnet in a military fashion, and walked to a low stool which had been placed for him near the fire, and which he seemed to recognize as an old acquaintance.

Tam Macalister, or Daft Tam, as he was usually called, followed at the heels of Willy. He appeared to be about thirty years of age, rather below the middle stature, and of a slender form of body, but well proportioned. His head, however, was rather small, and the forehead depressed ; the face was thin, although not emaciated ; the nose and the chin were both sharp ; and the eyes, which were hazel, were

shaded by bushy, sand-coloured eyebrows. His hair, for his head was uncovered, was red, curled and matted, as if it had never felt the influence of a comb. A thin tuft of beard, of the same colour as his hair, stood out in crisped curls from each cheek bone, and a similar tuft from the point of his chin. His complexion was sanguine; and his grin displayed a set of regular white teeth. He was barefooted; and, indeed, in all respects but scantily cloathed, for the skirts of his kilt were of various lengths, his elbows appeared through the sleeves of his jacket, and, instead of a plaid, the fiddle bag was slung across his shoulders: all which, added to the wild, savage expression of the idiotic smile, with which he saluted us as he entered the parlour, rendered his appearance, if less hideous, even more repulsive than that of the minstrel. He advanced closely behind Willy until that personage was seated, and then suddenly darted to a corner of the room, where he remained bolt upright, with his hands placed upon his breast, his mouth open, and his eyes fixed upon the child; who, although she did not seem to be in any degree alarmed, yet had taken her station between the knees of her father, with one arm thrown around his neck, and her head resting upon his shoulder.

“ You are welcome, Willy !” said my friend. “ We are much indebted to the storm for driving you in for shelter, after so long an absence ; and a sight of you, Tam, as the proverb runs, is guid for sair een.”

“ That bonnie birdie’s een need nae sich salve,” replied the idiot.

“ Haud ye’re tongue, ye haverell ! exclaimed the minstrel, interrupting the progress of Tam’s reply. “ Wha made ye a judge o’ leddies’ een ? Thank ye, laird, for your welcome. She’ll do her best to shew you that she kens she is no amang frem folk ; but she’s getting auld, and hae lost mickle o’ the spunk for dirling up a strarthspey that she had forty years sin. Aweel ! —she’ll do her best, laird ; and what mair can be expected o’ mortal ?”

“ Nothing more, indeed, Willy !” said Mrs. Campbell. “ But where have you been wandering these four months ? I think we have not seen you since June.”

“ That’s mair easily speered than answered,” replied the minstrel ; “ although, were she no afear’d to open that haverell’s mouth, Tam could tell you ilka fit o’ our gait. And how have you been, my leddie ? and how is the bonnie wee blossom that had just blinked on

the light o' this wearie warld, the last time we foregathered?"

That question touched a vibrating chord in the affections of my kind hostess; for the infant who was hanging on her breast at the time of Willy's last visit to Glen Dochart had soon afterwards died, and the recollections which the questions awakened brought a tear into her eye.

"Weel—weel—my leddie!" said the old man, perceiving her distress; "she sees how it is; puir wee bud! Oh, hone! we are a' wearing awa. It wad be naething for an eild trunk like hersel to fa;—and yet she be here: but, in troth, do we nae see the opening gowans droop i' the freshest dew o' the simmer morning?"

My friend, who dreaded the effect of the minstrel's moralizing on his wife's nerves, here interrupted him by requesting a strarthspey, which he knew was one of Willy's favorites.

"It will nae do," said Tam.

"Whist, ye gowk!" said Willy, tossing off a glass of glen-lievit, which Mr. Campbell had handed to him. "Whist, ye loon!—and yet," continued he, "the callan is nae sae far wrang. There is nae screwing up the pegs to do her bidden this nicht, laird: but she'll try what she

can do." And he commenced one of his liveliest airs. He had, however, scarcely gone through the bars, when he dropped the fiddle-stick and looked confused. "Tam says true—it winna do. She is nae hersel the nicht, laird!" exclaimed the old man, with a look of deep mortification; "she tried it in the kitchen, but she was nae hersel—she was nae Willy Duncan."

There was, nevertheless, great sweetness, and the most masterly touch in the performance; but my friend whispered to me that it wanted that peculiar expression which he had never heard executed by any musician except Niel Gow and Willy; and he feared that the old man was losing his powers. He filled for him a second glass of his favorite liquor, which the minstrel held in his hand for the space of a minute before he drank it, as if his mind was absent, and then tossed it off as usual, with a smack of his lips and a significant nod of his head. "I was thinking," said the melodist, "o' the taisch, which Angus Campbell, the seer o' Strarthfillan, saw yestreen. — 'I saw your wraith, Willy,' said she, 'in the gloamin.' I fear, laird," continued the old man, "there is a sound of death on the harp." But, as this quotation from Ossian was spoken in Gaelic, I did not understand it at the time, although I could

plainly perceive that some presentiment had given a cast of melancholy to the mind of the minstrel ; and this was confirmed by the condition of the idiot, who, at the remark of Willy, appeared as if struck with the cold fit of an ague, and muttered, loud enough to be heard, “ aye—aye—there’s a cauld sod on an auld man’s breast.” The minstrel neither perceived nor heard him ; and, casting a softened glance on my friend, which did not appear to belong to the harsh character of his physiognomy, began to play and sing “ the land o’ the leal,” in a strain of the most affecting pathos. It was irresistible ; and the passage, “ our bonnie bairn is there,” awakening the ideas of her recent loss in the imagination of Mrs. Campbell, she sobbed aloud : even my worthy friend’s fortitude was so shaken, that he interrupted the musician, and dismissed him with a bottle of glen-lievit, as a *doch-au-dorrach**, to the kitchen, desiring him not to leave the house till the storm should abate.

A pause ensued, and continued for some minutes after the parlour door was closed. Maria had left her father’s knees, and clung around her mother’s neck, endeavouring to sooth her by her mute caresses. My excellent friend, holding his wife’s hand within his, stood

* The farewell cup.

for some moments, with his moistened eyes riveted upon her and his child ; but, at length, recovering possession of himself, he approached the fire, and, drawing his chair close to mine, turned the conversation upon the singular being who had just quitted the room.

“ What an extraordinary anomaly in physiognomy that creature is !” said he. “ Who would suppose, on looking upon the severity of his features and the deformity of his person, that he possesses the sensibility, the tenderness, and pathos which characterize his music ? Nor is it in his art only that these feelings are displayed. He is not merely kind and humane to the poor idiot who accompanies him, but, out of the scanty revenue which his musical skill secures to him, he bestows a portion on Tom’s sister, although she has no other claim upon him than that which his humanity had raised, in beholding her nearly as helpless, from mental imbecility, as her idiotic brother.”

Mrs. Campbell, who had recovered her composure, joined her husband in praise of Willy’s philanthropy, and mentioned several instances of his kind-heartedness. An hour had nearly elapsed, and as the wind was lulled, and the rain abated, and yet no fiddling was heard in the kitchen, we concluded that the minstrel

and his follower were gone : but Maria, who knew well the fascinating power of glen-lievit over Willy, wherever he happened to sojourn, more justly decided that, as the bottle could not be emptied already, he must still be in the kitchen ; and her conclusion was soon verified, by our hearing the notes of his violin, in the rapid movements of a strarthspey.

“ I am rejoiced to hear that the mountain dew has produced its usual effects upon the ancient Gael,” said my friend ; and, advancing to the door, opened and left it ajar, that I might be able to judge of the dwarf’s masterly execution in that difficult style of playing. It, indeed, merited the eulogy which my host had bestowed upon it. Whilst we were silently listening, with feelings of exquisite delight, however, it suddenly ceased, and was succeeded by a terrific scream, and a confused noise of tongues, as if some accident had occurred. Campbell rose from his seat, and was proceeding to ascertain the cause, when he was met by one of the female servants, who was entering the room with a look of horror and dismay.

“ What is the matter ?” said her master. The poor girl gazed wildly upon him ; then staggered into the room, unable to utter a word ; and, sinking down upon a chair, with her hands

pressing upon her breast, she gasped for breath, and became violently hysterical.

“For Heaven’s sake! what is the matter, Mary?” demanded Mrs. Campbell, who had hastened to her assistance and prevented her from falling to the ground. “For Heaven’s sake! tell me what is the matter?”

The girl could reply only by a wild stare and convulsive gaspings; until, at length, finding utterance, she exclaimed—“Oh, ma-am! he’s gone!—dead!—aye—quite dead!” and then again fell into hysterics.

Mr. Campbell, who saw that there was some strong reason for Mary’s perturbation, and was aware that his excellent wife was not the proper person to investigate it, beckoned to me to lead her back to her seat; and, after having succeeded in soothing the agitation of the domestic, he gradually drew from her the fact, that the minstrel had fallen down in a fit in the act of playing, whilst she and the other servants were dancing to his music. This relation shocked us greatly; but we hoped that, in Mary’s alarm, she might have imagined the fatal result. Campbell and myself accordingly hastened to the kitchen, to ascertain the truth of her statement. It was too true. The corpse of the poor dwarf was lying upon the floor;

while the footman, standing over it, was chafing his temples, and one of the farm servants, who happened to be in the kitchen and was one of the dancers, was beating the palm of his right hand, for his left still grasped the violin, in the hope of restoring the circulation. It was in vain to attempt any mode of recovery. I opened the old man's jacket, and found that the heart had ceased to beat, and the tide of life ebbed, never to return. I communicated the fact to Campbell, who was feeling the pulse at the wrist, and who, being also convinced that he was really dead, gave orders to convey the body to a bed room, and to do every thing which is usual on such occasions.

As we were turning round to retrace our steps to the parlour, our eyes were arrested by the appearance of poor Tom, who was standing, in the middle of the kitchen, as if paralysed into a statue, expressive of idiotic horror. He stood near the feet of the corpse, with his knees slightly bent, his head inclined forward, his mouth open, and his eyes distended and fixed upon the body. One hand was raised, and grasping his matted locks on the back of his head, and the other closely pressed upon his bosom.

“Poor Tom!” said my friend, regarding

him with a look of sympathy, "you have lost a firm friend: but you shall not feel the loss while I have the power to protect you."

"It winna do," said the idiot, keeping his eyes riveted upon the corpse. "She'll play nae mair the nicht." Then, gazing wildly in my friend's face, he exclaimed, in most piteous accents, "Willy's dead! Willy's dead! clean dead, laird!—she'll play nae mair the nicht.—There's a cauld sód on an auld man's breast—aye! Willy's dead—dead—Willy's dead!"

There was something inexpressibly tender in this apostrophe of the poor fool. It almost overcame my worthy friend, who ordered that every care should be taken of the kind-hearted creature.

This melancholy event threw a gloom over our little circle. Poor Tom, who remained under my friend's roof, moved about the house, perfectly unconscious of the objects around him, ejaculating, in a suppressed tone, "Willy's dead!—There is a cauld sod on an auld man's breast!—Willy's dead!" At length he absented himself for some days, and no intimation could be obtained of his retreat, until accident enabled me to discover it.

There is an inexpressible beauty in the first opening of the day, in this mountainous country; and, as it then was dawn at five

o'clock, I usually rose and walked out to enjoy the freshness of the early morning. It was in one of these rambles that I encountered poor Tom. The morning was lovely, some clouds, which hung upon the eastern horizon, towards which the romantic glen, where my friend's house was situated, opened, assumed a deep purple hue, and were fringed with a golden light; the diffusion of which over the whole of the orient, softened into the blue of the zenith, produced the finest contrast of warm colouring to the cold, leaden aspect of the west. The retiring darkness seemed but the rising of a curtain, shewing the landscape breaking, like a fresh creation, upon the sight, from amidst the mist that floated along the glen. First, the summits of the mountains, on the opposite side of Loch Tay, to the margin of which the vale declined with a gentle descent, were seen rising like islands in the ocean: then, the tops of the nearer hills and rocky eminences, tufted with dark foliage, appearing above the white vapour; and, at length, as the splendid luminary shot up his golden rays, the immediate harbingers of his gorgeous presence, rocks, trees, cottages, meadows, fields, and the glittering expanse of the lake, gradually appeared, and the whole varied landscape spread itself beneath the de-

lighted eye. The state of the weather was peculiarly favorable for observing the glory of the rising sun, which, now ascending from the verge of the horizon, like a globe of molten gold, rose slowly and majestically, kindling in splendour, until the eye was almost blinded by gazing upon its effulgence. All Nature seemed to sympathize in the grateful sensations that the hour was calculated to inspire: the rock linnet and the robin carolled sweetly in the surrounding copses of dwarf birch and juniper; the cottage cock answered the voice of his distant fellow; the lowing of the cattle, scarcely visible among the flowery furze; the bleating of the sheep upon the hills; the soft rushing of the mountain torrents; the gurgling of the little runnels; the tiny horn of the wild bee; and the almost audible springing of the herbage, pendent with dewy pearls;—all proclaimed the blessings of returning day.

Whilst I stood contemplating the scene, and moralizing to myself on the ephemeral life of man, for whose enjoyment chiefly our vanity leads us to believe all nature was created, my attention was attracted by the sound of a human voice at no great distance; and, casting my eyes towards the quarter whence it proceeded, I observed, in the village church-yard,

Poor Tom seated upon the grave which contained the remains of his late patron, chanting a simple melody in a clear and melodious voice. I approached the spot. The poor idiot was habited in the black jacket and tartan kilt that my friend Campbell had bestowed upon him ; but, as usual, he was bare-headed and bare-legged.

He did not raise his head as I advanced ; nor, indeed, seemed he at all conscious of my presence, but continued his song in a slow, plaintive measure, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. He was occasionally silent for a few minutes ; then went on with his crone—" now awa hame—hame—Willy's gane hame—Willy's dead—puir Willy's dead ;" and, after a short pause, again chanted the same words. The pathetic manner in which these expressions of the kind-hearted creature's crazed imagination were uttered, completely overpowered my feelings. I endeavoured, in vain, to abstract the attention of the poor fellow from the subject on which the little mind that he possessed was so deeply riveted. He gazed wistfully in my face, and uttered—" Willy's dead !—puir Willy's dead !" At length he rose from the grave, walked away for a short distance, and returned again ;—looked on the

sod for a minute, and then finally departed. My eye followed the melancholy being as he slowly wound down the beautiful glen, occasionally hid by a craggy mound, tufted with dark fir, intermixed with the silvery birch, and again brought into view upon an acclivity, whence the notes of his requiem, which he continued to chant, were floated to my ear ; until, turning into a defile that led out of the glen, I lost sight of him entirely, and the strain died upon the breeze.

I afterwards learned from my worthy friend that there was much difficulty in tearing the poor idiot from the grave, to which he daily resorted. He was taken to Mr. Campbell's house ; but he did not long survive to require the kindness of his generous and warm-hearted protector.

CHAPTER VII.

“What we shall do is doubtful; but what we have done is certain, and out of the power of fortune.”—SENECA.

THE gratification derived from the recital of any story depends only in part upon the matter of the relation: the best incidents lose much of their effect if narrated in a humdrum manner. Like the touch of the master on the already sculptured statue, the voice, the gesture, the expression of the story-teller, bring forward points into bold relief that would otherwise be lost to observation, and stamp a finish and a value on the whole, which the utmost skill of the workman cannot bestow. Such was the effect of Mr. Mordaunt's narration: he received the compliments, with one exception, of the whole party; but that one, of all others, was the individual whose approval was most coveted by him, and the dearest to his heart,—namely, Caroline Ashton.

“I had no idea,” said the Painter, “that Mr. Mordaunt had so powerful a feeling of the

picturesque : his description of the glen was so graphic, that I could have made a composition from it. Have you cultivated drawing, Mr. Mordaunt?"

"Never—"

"Except," added the Advocate, taking up the word, "to note down his sentiments of the scene before him, which he does in words, as you do in lines and colours. There is, however, little difference between you: both address the intellect — only Mr. Mordaunt employs words, and you form images. Mr. Mordaunt's is the language of refinement, the production of an advanced stage of civilization; yours, my friend, is the perfection of that hieroglyphical mode of communicating and perpetuating impressions and events which Nature teaches man in the infancy of society."

Miss Standard, who feared that these remarks would lead to a warm argument, anticipated the remark which hung upon the lips of the Artist, by saying that she felt greatly interested in the fate of poor Tom. "But I always understood," she continued, directing her remark to me, "that idiots possess little sensibility."

Those into whose hands this journal may fall, will, I fear, believe that all professional

men are more or less infected with the desire of delivering a lecture, in replying to questions such as those Miss Standard had just put to me. She, good creature, in her eagerness to prevent an argument between the Advocate and the Artist, had, singularly enough, forgotten, in this remark, how fairly she laid me open, in any reply I might hazard, to the fire of the heaviest artillery of the Cantab: but there was no evading the question; therefore I replied that "the idiot, in common with the lower animals, displays, among the other brute passions, attachment to those who are kind to him. Joy, fear, and danger," I also remarked, "are felt by the idiot, in a limited degree: and, in respect to his attachment, that is strengthened by his unfitness for the ordinary avocations of life:—indeed, the whole of the small portion of intellect which he possesses is divided between attachment and anger, the cause of the latter of which in him is bodily pain, or the dread of it." As I had anticipated, the Cantab was determined not to lose the opportunity of advancing his favorite study.

"I am rejoiced, Doctor," said he, "to find that you have admitted that idiots are defective in the ordinary animal passions; for the development of brain in them, even in the

organs of the higher faculties, is less than in the dog : thence, I must conclude, that, whether you believe or denounce phrenology in words, you are at heart a phrenologist."

I felt vexed to be forced to reply ; and, perhaps, be plunged into a long and tedious argument upon a subject that I knew the whole party detested ; but, as I observed that a rejoinder was expected by Miss Standard, who had drawn her chair close to mine, I denied, decidedly, any faith in phrenology. But I contended that many animals, as well as man, are capable of comparing perceptions and thoughts ; as their actions demonstrate. " They exercise this judgment, however," said I, " with regard to external objects : they are incapable of forming any general conclusions, or abstract ideas."

The Cantab was about to answer me, when, his keen eye falling upon the countenance of the veteran, he perceived a storm gathering upon his brows, and therefore wisely remained silent. The Colonel, who was at this moment pacing the room, was constrained therefore to gulp down the volley of imprecations against phrenology that was at his tongue's end. He stopped short, and, turning to Mordaunt, exclaimed—" By Gad ! my dear Sir ! your story is

one of powerful interest, and has amply repaid the deep attention which it obtained. I trust it is only the van-guard of a strong body that is to follow. By Gad! a most delightful mode of passing the evening!—what say you, Carry, my dear?”

Caroline, who had remained musing and silent, concurred briefly in the remark. The romance that Mr. Mordaunt had displayed in his narrative,—the tender gaze which she perceived he fixed upon her, occasionally, as it proceeded, as if to watch the impression which it made upon her feelings,—convinced her of a fact which she had some time suspected—namely, that she was loved by one to whom, in thought, she had already given her affection. Nor, indeed, with the structure of mind that she possessed, was this surprising. It was one that could love only where it acknowledged superiority. She supposed Frederick Mordaunt possessed of the highest powers of intellect; and what woman is not prepared to estimate inordinately the object of her idolatry?

The gracefulness of Mr. Mordaunt's delivery, his enthusiastic love of the beautiful and sublime of Nature, the poetry of his descriptions, his delicate attachment to the social virtues, which she correctly judged of from his painting

of the domestic circle of his friend, and the elevated character of his thoughts in passing from the things of this world to those of the unchanging future, could not be lost upon the discriminating mind of Caroline Ashton. The impression to which she had already opened her heart became therefore from that moment indelible. She said nothing; but, when her eye met that of Mr. Mordaunt, the pleasureable sensations that lighted it up; the moisture that slightly bedewed it; the colour of the cheek, that came and went; would have rendered it vain to cloak her sentiments, had she wished to attempt what was so opposite to her nature. The smile of approbation, therefore, which beamed upon her countenance seemed to assure her admirer of her approval, and that there was nothing in her feelings unfavorable to the hope which he fondly cherished. The smile was accompanied with that inclination of the head and bend of the neck, so inexpressively graceful, which marks the gentlewoman of cultivated manners; and, as she left the room with her aunt and cousin, for the night was advanced, Mr. Mordaunt's eye followed her with an intensity of gaze which did not escape the penetration of the Advocate, who found no difficulty in perusing the mind of his friend.

This impression on Mr. Mordaunt's heart was deep and powerful. The love that had been awakened in it for Louisa Manvers, although it was blighted in the bud, and embalmed in tears, yet had up to this moment cradled her image in his heart, and made it the idol of his idolatry. But the original ductility of Mordaunt's nature had remained unaffected, only because it had met with nothing strong enough to mould it to a new impression. His introduction to the family of Colonel Standard, however, was destined to demonstrate that the original elements of character remain the same, and merely require circumstances sufficient to reanimate them, however long they have been lulled into inactivity. Mr. Mordaunt perceived, in Caroline Ashton, fascinations and charms that even the vivid reminiscence of Louisa Manvers could not throw into the shade: his heart gradually opened to the impression; and, at length, he was himself startled at the flame thus rekindled in his bosom.

I, as well as the Advocate, perceived the thoughts that were passing in the mind of Mr. Mordaunt. What an odd thing love appears to those who are contemplating its influence over others. It is possible, thought I, as I reached the threshold of my room, where my

excellent servant Dugald had replenished the fire with fresh peats, and placed a pair of candles, my journal, and pen and ink, upon the table,—for he knew my habit of recording the occurrences of the day before I retired to rest,—it is possible that neither of those young people are in love for the first time. What then?—that does not weaken the passion: on the contrary, how frequently is the second impression deeper and more idelible than the first; aye, and even more productive of happiness.

Why is it, thought I, when the heart is young, untainted, unexperienced in the duplicity of the world, and unacquainted with suspicion,—when the clouds of care have not yet flung their shadows across our morning path, and the dew is upon the rose,—when the imagination is attuned to the enjoyment of the present, and paints the future with still more brilliant colours,—why is it that, at this period of life, the first engagement of the affections is frequently more likely to prove less permanent, and to lead to less happier unions, than those occurring at a later period; or those that are the result of new and second impressions? Now, of all mortal men, whose ideas are ever vacillating, by the buffetings of contending feelings in the ordinary intercourse of the world

—aye, and of all immortal men, dreaming of a glorious future, by manuring only one stock of ideas,—none was less likely to answer this question than myself; nevertheless, I set zealously to the task. My position, indeed, was admirably adapted for meditation: my spectacles were across my nose; my back was to the fire, to permit the full enjoyment of the radiated caloric that flowed from the glowing peats; and, in this grateful position, I turned the proposition in every direction in my mind. That the fact was undoubted, could not be denied: that it ran counter to the ordinary working of cause and effect, was as undoubted: yet, experience had proved that it is too generally the case: indeed, there was no denying that first impressions in early life, however vivid, pure, and sincere on both sides, are not always the most indelible.

Whether it was the warmth of the fire, or the intricacy of the subject, or both, I know not; but my mind imperceptibly dropped the train of reasoning which it had commenced, and fell into a condition of quiescent vacancy, a sort of Swiss meditation, from which it was only roused by the clock of the inn striking twelve:—it was the announcement of a new day; and with it all my difficulties vanished.

It is evident, said I to myself,—quite evident, that first love has more to do with the imagination than that second modified attachment which is, in a great degree, the result of judgment, an acquaintance with the character and disposition of the parties, and a conviction that the tempers accord.

In early and first attachments, the beloved object is adorned with all that the creative powers of the imagination can summon to its aid, to elevate the virtues and clothe with grace, loveliness, and beauty, the idol of adoration: all the perfections of both parties are brought forward by each, and viewed in the most dazzling light; all the failings are thrown into the deepest shadow;—each lives only to please,—to gratify the other,—“love answering love:” the path of life lies before them strewn with flowers:—high in hope, they set forward in a world which they have pictured as a paradise; and they anticipate uninterrupted felicity as their destined lot. Happy, indeed, would wedded life be, were their anticipations founded upon an accurate knowledge of each other, obtained before marriage. But, generally, too soon the romantic visions of the lovers are dissipated by the every-day reality of the married pair; and as this awakens them from

their dream, it too often convinces them of the rash and imprudent choice they have made : thence, the depth of their disappointment is equivalent to the height of their anticipated happiness. The husband finds out that the angel of his fancy is selfish, vain, wilful, and desires to manage him in every thought and action ; in fact, that he must be her slave, to insure either peace, or a trace of comfort at home. The wife, if her wish to rule be resisted, sees nothing but a tyrant in the husband, whom, in the lover, she had pictured as a god. She disdains, however, to submit ; and a futurity of unhappiness to both parties, if their contentions do not terminate in disgust, separation, or irretrievable ruin, is the result.

I turned the picture to examine the reverse position. I found the hearts of both parties equally tender ; but their passions less volcanic ; there was no idolizing—no false halo dazzling the sight on either side : love had not darted into the bosom like an electrical coruscation, alighting among combustible matter ; it had crept in imperceptibly, and nestled itself quietly in the heart, before either party was aware of its presence. Pray do not misunderstand me, gentle reader. It is not my opinion that, in love, a man should be lighted, like a candle, at

the top, and burn slowly downwards :—no ; the heart and the feelings should be first engaged ; but by influencing the judgment also, the passion becomes a serious one ; both parties feel how much depends on their accurate knowledge of the disposition of each other for the maintenance of their attachment ; and, having acquired this, it is secure. It was unnecessary to press the argument further ; my mind was satisfied : besides, my own experience being against the stability of very early attachments—for the settled melancholy that had withered all the budding enjoyments of my life was the consequence of one begun almost in childhood—that settled the question.

The chords of sorrow, when touched ever so lightly, vibrate more powerfully than those of joy ; thence the reminiscences that my reflections had awakened did not contribute to lessen the usual weight upon my spirits ; and I fell into a reverie that was interrupted I know not how : but the stillness of the hour, broken only by the muffled rumbling of the waterfall behind the inn, told me that the night was far advanced. My diary lay untouched ; my candles diffused scarcely a ray of light, for want of snuffing ; and my exhausted fire was dying on the hearth. I had, however, a duty to perform before going

to rest; and, therefore, raking together the embers, snuffing the candles, and opening my diary, I finished these details of the transactions of the day. What a pity, thought I, as I closed the book, that I cannot add to the record some account of Miss Caroline Ashton. There is something in the appearance of that interesting girl, and especially in her smile, that reminds me of an individual connected with a very interesting event of my life:—I wish I knew something of her history!

Now, gentle reader, thou art already deeply indebted to me, as an Editor, for that judicious alteration of the arrangement of my deceased friend's notes which has made you acquainted with Mr. Mordaunt; and, as it is my ambition to increase your debt of gratification by a similar transposition of the information which the journal contained respecting Miss Ashton, I must request your attention to the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ For some the world must have, on whom to lay
The heavy burden of reproach and blame.”

DANIEL.

“ SIT down, my good friend, and you shall know all,” said the Veteran, as he applied to his nostrils a pinch of macaba that he had held for ten minutes betwixt his thumb and fore finger, whilst he listened to my reasons for wishing to be informed who Miss Ashton was: then, putting his snuff-box into his waistcoat pocket, he seated himself; and, as usual, having spread his handkerchief on one knee before he crossed it with the other leg, he thus began his narrative:—

“ Major Ashton, my father-in-law, although an officer in the American army, yet, was a native of Devonshire; and retained so much of English blood in his veins, that I believe, by Gad! he willingly would have thrown up his commission, and returned, like the prodigal

son, to his paternal soil, had it not pleased Heaven to bereave him of his wife, who left him a widower, with two young daughters. They must have suffered greatly, had he sacrificed his property to his loyalty. You know, Doctor, how hardly the British Government dealt with the American loyalists. Major Ashton, therefore, wisely determined to remain where he was ; but, anxious to obtain for his girls those advantages of instruction that the United States did not afford, he brought them to England ; and, having placed them in a boarding school at Kensington, he returned to Georgia. He had allotted two years for the completion of their education.

“ The girls were pretty, and amiable. You have seen the traces of both these gifts of Providence in my wife ; although she is sadly altered, Doctor, since you first knew her : but, by Gad ! time spares none of us any more than her.”

“ ’Tis too true,” said I, responding to my friend’s remark, as my eye fell upon my emaciated limb, which I had stretched out to rest upon a chair beside me ; “ ’tis too true :—but, after all, we have nothing less than we deserve ; why should we complain ?”

“ You are a philosopher,” replied the Ve-

teran, drawing his right leg up upon his left knee, which it crossed, so that he could lay hold of the ankle with his left hand, whilst his right hand rested upon the right knee. "As for me, I wish it were otherwise! I cannot look in my poor wife's countenance, and recollect its former bloom, without being shocked with the ravages that grief has made upon it. Mental sickness is a worse sickness, my good friend, than any ailment of the body: it withers us in our prime: some few may bend before the blast and rise again; but how many break down! It preys both upon body and soul: our affections, our best feelings, are changed—our temper is soured. You are a philosopher, Doctor—tell me, how is it that the immortal, undying portion of our being should thus suffer like the perishable stuff of our bodies?"

"It is a question," said I, "that cannot be discussed at present. I shall only reply to you, therefore, in the words of my father in *Tristram Shandy*:—'the soul and the body are like a coat and its lining; rumple the one, and you rumple the other.'"

"Humph!" said the Colonel, smiling; "'tis a good simile."—And he went on with his narrative.

"The two girls, as I was remarking, were

pretty and amiable ; but report says—for I never saw her—that Caroline, the elder of the two, was the most beautiful. From all that I have heard, she was one of those beauties who fascinate every man they come near, and always have a host of adorers around them ; but who, by Gad ! seldom make good wives. They are spoiled, Doctor ! utterly spoiled, by flattery and their looking glasses,—they live upon admiration. No women are so apt to go wrong. Too often a woman of this kind is either taken in, if she have money, by some adventurer endowed with a soft persuasive tongue, and who can utter falsehoods with the most unblushing countenance ; or, if her beauty is her dowry, she becomes the victim of one of those worthless scamps who regard the sex only as objects for the gratification of the worst feelings of our nature. You know the description of fellows that I mean, Doctor ?” said the Veteran, emphatically,—rising at the same time from his seat, and, with his handkerchief in his hand, taking three rapid strides across the room.

“ They are a cowardly set of cold-hearted scoundrels !—they are a blot upon humanity !” said I.

“ They are a set of poltroons, in every sense of the word : and yet, by Gad ! they are per-

mitted to mingle in society,”—rejoined the old man, crossing his arms upon his breast, and standing in a musing posture as he uttered the sentence.

“ They should be sent to Coventry.”

“ It is too mild a punishment,” said the Veteran ; “ in the infinite mercy of Heaven, they should be sent to——” ‘The word was not spoken ; but, as the old gentleman gulped it down,—“ I wish,” continued he, resting his left hand upon the back of the chair which he had quitted, and demonstrating with the fore finger of his right,—“ I wish it were my lot to pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon the whole race ! By Gad ! the punishment should teach them what it is to prey upon the happiness of woman : for, my good fellow, you know, as well as I do, that to attack the helpless, the weak, and the unprotected, is the worst of all crimes in the eyes of a soldier : and what else is it when the affections of woman are entangled in the net of the seducer ;—when, unsuspecting, she hangs upon the faith of his promise ;—and, after falling, she is spurned from him, like a vile, corrupted thing—an object fit only for the finger of scorn to point at ?”

“ It is, indeed, a melancholy truth,” responded I ; “ but proceed with your story.”

“The girls,” said the old Colonel, “were sent, during the holidays, to the house of their Aunt, Lady Fancourt, who resided in Portland Place ; and when they left school altogether, as unforeseen circumstances prevented Major Ashton from returning to England at the end of two years, they were received under her roof, to await their father’s arrival. But Lady Fancourt was not the person I should have selected for the charge of young women entering into life. She had been a beauty herself ; and, although arrived at a certain age, yet, the love of distinction still clung to her. Deeply involved in the vortex of pleasure, she was too much occupied with dress and company, to afford that attention to her nieces which their age demanded. Her house was the resort of most of the young men of fashion, and of any pretensions, in the circle that she moved in, which was one of the gayest and most fashionable : and, consequently, the society into which the Miss Ashtons were introduced was fraught with allurements the most dangerous for minds not yet capable of appreciating the superior value of sterling character, above the tinsel glare of the superficial accomplishments that belong to the mere man of the world.

Among the visitors who crowded the draw-

ing room of Lady Fancourt, was an officer of the Horse Guards, a young man whose society was much courted, although he had neither family nor fortune to recommend him,—a rare occurrence, by Gad! Doctor. Nobody knew who he was, and nobody cared to enquire. His military acquirements, I understand, were considerable: he studied his profession as a branch of science, and he had already attained the character of a good and accomplished soldier; although only a cornet, yet he had been appointed to the adjutancy of the regiment; and had received the thanks of his superior officers for the degree of excellent discipline to which he had brought it. His personal acquirements were those suited to high life; yet his manners did not display that natural ease and stamp of gentility which characterize the gentleman by birth. He drew like an artist; sung with taste and scientific skill; danced gracefully; spoke French, German, and Italian; and was intimately acquainted with the polite literature of the day. The growing attachment between this young officer and Miss Ashton was obvious to every one except Lady Fancourt:—foolish woman!—she saw and thought of nothing but herself. This officer was every day in Portland Place; every evening in Lady Fancourt's box

at the Opera: the best specimens of his pencil were laid at the feet of Miss Ashton; when she played, he accompanied her with his voice; he was invariably her partner in the first quadrille or waltz in every party; in short, he was like her shadow, by Gad!—ever at her side; and when their eyes met, the consciousness she displayed, proved, unequivocally, the depth of the sentiment which he had impressed on her heart. Well—to make a long tale short, this intimacy proceeded until one evening, at a ball given by Lady Fancourt, at which Cornet Atkinson waltzed with Miss Ashton, the young lady disappeared.”

“Did you say Atkinson?” said I, interrupting the narrative; for the name struck upon my ear like a spell; and a whole train of transactions, which had hitherto been involved in mystery, at once appeared in a clear and intelligible point of light. “Was Atkinson the name of the officer?” I repeated.

“It was,” replied the Veteran, looking me full in the face, struck with the emphatic manner in which the question was put; “and if he is now alive, he is a Lieutenant-Colonel.”

“Proceed,” said I; “you shall know the cause of my enquiry in due time: at present, I am most anxious to hear the termination of

your narrative. The Colonel looked astonishment;—but, after another pinch of maccaba, he continued thus:—

“ The nature of the party, and the circumstances connected with it, enabled the fugitives to gain time before their flight was suspected; and the greater number of the visitors had departed ere the absence of Miss Ashton occasioned any surprize. When the fact at length was known, you may readily conceive the hubbub that it caused; and, when it also was reported that she had gone off with Cornet Atkinson, Lady Fancourt at once became sensible that she had shut her eyes to transactions, which were evident not only to every inmate, but to every visitor, in the family. Her responsibility to her brother, and her consciousness how unworthily she had performed the trust reposed in her, added to the poignancy of her feelings; and, after consulting some friends, she determined to pursue the fugitives, and, if possible, prevent that step which she justly believed would only tend to insure the wretchedness of her niece.

“ The great difficulty that attended the fulfilment of this determination, was the selection of a gentleman to accompany her in the pursuit. She was a widow; but the rich, warm blood of

youth still circled in her veins ; and, amidst a host of admirers, had she consulted only the emotions that harboured in her bosom, she might have readily selected a companion : but she felt that the gaze of the world was upon her, and she reluctantly yielded to the restraint which it imposed on the dictates of her inclination in this matter. Her marriage with Sir John Fancourt had been, on her part, one of interest. Beautiful, proud, and a reigning belle, she had trampled under feet offers that would have secured her happiness ; and sacrificed her affections on the altar of ambition, merely to gain a title. The disparity of age of the parties was too great, for Sir John was thirty years older than his wife ; whilst the diversity of the tastes and feelings and the superiority of Lady Fancourt's intellectual acquirements, produced disunion, then indifference, and ultimately disquiet and hatred between this ill-sorted couple, which terminated only with the life of the Baronet. By Gad ! Doctor, it was not surprising that the young widow's heart was open to new impressions ; but I shall wander from my story if I begin to detail her adventures : she married again, and found in a second union a sum of felicity by no means equal to counterbalance her misery in the first.

“ Among the daily attendants in her Ladyship’s drawing-room, was one who had hung upon the chair of every rich widow in the fashionable world for half a century ; and, without having lost a particle of the follies of youth, was generally looked upon as so truly harmless a creature, as to be utterly without the pale of scandal. He was constantly at the elbow of Lady Fancourt, escorted her to all public places, was even permitted to put her boar round his neck in returning from the opera in damp nights ; yet none ever dreamt that she regarded him in any other light than as an appendage to her comfort, as a footstool or a fan. To this antiquated bachelor, Sir Charles Stiffney, Lady Fancourt dispatched a note, requesting he would hasten to her immediately, as she wished his advice and assistance on a matter of the utmost importance.

“ It was in the second hour of the morning when the messenger reached the apartments of Sir Charles in the Albany. The worthy Baronet had left her ladyship’s only half an hour before receiving her commands, and had just wiped and placed his glass-eye in water ; for the natural organ which it supplied had been poked out by the thrust of an umbrella, in a broil at an election ; but so cunningly had

Nature been imitated, that few, even of his intimate associates, knew or suspected it."

"Have you ever, Doctor," said the Veteran, "seen a real London dandy's dressing room?"

"Never;" I replied.

"Then," continued he, "you shall have a description of one as I received it—by Gad! I never saw any thing like it.

"The table at which the old beau was seated was of rose-wood, inlaid with lacquered brass-work in the most classical taste. The looking glass, which stood upon it, was in a massive, antiquated, carved frame, partly silvered, partly gilt, and apparently an old family relic, as the glass was panelled Dutch-plate: on each side of it lay a small oval, handled glass, intended to aid the examination of every part of the head; and, before it, a handsome crimson velvet pincushion, in which were two brilliant pins, attached by a small gold chain, four rings, and a splendid topaz brooch, which the Baronet had worn that evening at Lady Fancourt's. The dressing-box, of chased silver, was open, and displayed the soap-glass and other appendages, with gilt, chased covers, embedded in the richest purple velvet. The table was, besides, spread with a profusion of scent bot-

gles, tooth brushes, pots of cosmetics, bottles of washes, and pill boxes. Behind the glass, raised upon stands, were two handsome wigs, of deep auburn, of Robinson's most natural make ; one of which had, only a few minutes before, left the cranium of its possessor, and yielded place to a deep-green velvet cap, trimmed with gold lace. The washing stand was a pure white marble slab, supported upon a richly-carved frame of the same wood as the dressing-table ; whilst the basins, soap-boxes, and covered jars of various kinds, were of the most valuable china ; and the water-bottles and tumblers of the richest cut-glass. (On the opposite side of the room stood a large swing looking-glass, adapted to exhibit the entire person ; and, close to it, a boot and shoe stand, on which hung as many of these articles as might have sufficed for setting up a ready-made shoe shop. The slippers that now incased the feet of the Baronet were dark-red satin, embroidered, and trimmed with fur, to correspond with the dressing-gown, which was of Indian shawl, lined with white satin, and furnished with a deep fur collar.

“ The old beau, as I said, had just laid his glass-eye into clean water ; and was in the act of examining, in the looking glass, a new

set of French teeth, which he had that evening worn for the first time; whilst Louis, his valet,—I believe, Doctor, I should call him gentleman, should I not?—In my time, by Gad! the term valet was thought good enough for these fellows: but times are altered, and they are now called gentlemen.—Well; Mr. Louis, who was the faithful chronicler of all the scandal of the neighbourhood, whilst folding up his master's clothes, was also busy in amusing him with some scandalous gossip. On opening the door to the tap of the groom, Louis received the epistle of Lady Fancourt, which he handed to his master. The poor old beau thought it unfortunate—most unfortunate, indeed—that the note had not arrived sooner, as he might have been spared the trouble of being again made up: but he consoled himself with the idea of his own importance, and the conviction that it arose from his having the reputation of sound judgment. A note was, therefore, quickly despatched, in reply to Lady Fancourt's; and, with the aid of Louis, the eye being replaced, and everything made right to the satisfaction of the Baronet on viewing himself in the swing-glass; and his shoulders being covered with a Spanish cloak, he was assisted by Louis into a hackney coach; and,

in a few minutes afterwards, was safely landed in Portland Place.

“ The conference with Lady Fancourt terminated in the ready acquiescence of the Baronet to accompany her to Gretna ; and every preliminary being as speedily as possible arranged, the dawn of the morning discovered a travelling chariot and four, with Monsieur Louis and Lady Fancourt’s maid in the dicky, well enveloped in cloaks, changing horses at St. Albans.

“ By Gad, Doctor ! it was all in vain. The carriage containing the Cornet and Miss Ashton was returning down the avenue from Gretna Hall, before that in pursuit had reached Kirkby Lonsdale. The knot, however, had not been tied : for the young lady, although she had taken so imprudent a step as to elope with the Cornet, yet, strange as it may appear, was determined not to be married by the sot whose office it was to perform the ceremonial ;—a resolution she conceived the first moment she cast her eyes upon him at Gretna Hall. The journey had afforded her time for reflection ; she was conscious of, and secretly repented, the indiscretion of the step which she had taken ; and these feelings determined her, notwithstanding the genuine affection which she

felt for Mr. Atkinson, to resist what she regarded a mere mockery of marriage.

The disappointment of the young man, who had anticipated no obstacle of this kind, almost drove him to distraction ; and, upon his knees, he supplicated the completion of the engagement they had mutually sworn to fulfil :—he pointed out to her, in the strongest colours, the taint that would rest upon her character, and what she would suffer in being pointed at by the finger of scorn, and the sneers of the world, were they to return to the metropolis unmarried : and, ultimately, he appealed to a quarter in which he knew she was most susceptible—her affection.

The poor girl was completely overcome ; she paced the room with feelings of the most intense anxiety, then stopped, and gazed for a few moments upon the countenance of her lover, who had flung himself upon the sofa in an agony of despair. She seated herself beside him, placed her hand in his, and, whilst she looked in his face, the tear-drops gathering in her eye, she replied—

“ ‘ Mr. Atkinson, can you doubt my affection—have I not sacrificed everything to that sentiment—have I not proved to you, that you are dearer to me than life ?—but, on that very

account, spare me—spare me from assenting to that which would make me an object of disgust to myself. Devoted as my love is, I cannot—I never will consent to be united to you except in that manner which my consciousness of rectitude and my religious feelings dictate.’ ”

“ The appeal was irresistible—for, libertine as he had been, the affection of Atkinson for Miss Ashton was sincere :—she never before appeared so fascinating in the eyes of her lover—every argument that he had prepared for urging his suit, gave way before that supplicating look ; and, when her lips, with a smile of earnest assurance of her appeal being granted playing around them, were modestly raised to his cheek, he pressed her to his bosom, and assured her that he never again would mention the subject ; and he should instantly enquire whether it was not possible to have the ceremony performed according to the rites of the church. There was, at all events, an imperious necessity for their immediately leaving the inn, as there could be no doubt that they were pursued : the only difficulty was, how and where they were to direct their march ; for, by Gad ! they might as well have remained in the enemy’s country as continued where they were. This difficulty was productive of one advan-

tage at the moment—it convinced Miss Ashton of the sincerity of the Cornet's affection ; and, from the delicacy of his conduct towards her, under these circumstances, she anticipated a permanency of happiness in the marriage state, that had scarcely before crossed her thoughts.

“ The recital of feelings like these, Doctor,” said the Veteran, as he passed the back of his forefinger across his eyes, “ brings bye-gone moments to my recollection, the most delicious of my life : for, by Gad ! there are no sensations so exquisitely delightful—none that come so near to those that we are led to suppose are the attributes of the spiritual inhabitants of heaven, as those that thrill our bosoms when we are assured that we are truly beloved by those we love.”

“ Yes ;” replied I, “ it is by that deeply impressive eloquence that women rule the world ; and did they know their power, and manage it aright, what a blessed world might they make of it !” My feelings of bye-gone hours, however, were widely different from those of the Veteran ; but this is not the place to record my misfortunes.

“ Proceed, my dear Sir,” said I, “ your narrative deepens every moment in interest.”

“ The inquiries of the Cornet were so well

managed, that he found it was possible that they might be married according to the service of the Scotch Church, by proceeding to Langholm. There was no difficulty in eluding pursuit and in getting there: for, by taking places in the coach to Glasgow, and stopping at Longton, they might then post on to Langholm; whilst the pursuing party would, most probably, hurry forwards to Glasgow. The sole chance against the success of this scheme was, the probability of the arrival of their pursuers before the coach came up from Carlisle: and, to evade this, the waiter, who was bribed into, and who had proposed, this plan of proceeding, directed them secretly to go on foot to a small village about two miles distant from the inn, where they could be taken up by the coach. He assured them that this plan had succeeded on other occasions, as he said that the parties in runaway-matches were never suspected of going by the coach.

“Every movement was successful,” continued the Colonel; “the minister of Langholm, Mr. Martin—”

“Mr. Martin, did you say,” exclaimed I, interrupting the narrative of the Veteran, “Martin; the most excellent of men! he was

one of my earliest friends—my venerated tutor—and a better, or a kinder heart, the light of heaven never shone upon ! 'Tis very odd that he should have been an actor in this drama, of the sequel of which I know more than you are aware of ;—but proceed, my dear Sir, I am all anxiety to hear the result of Atkinson's interview with old Martin."

"As I was saying," continued the old gentleman, after fixing upon me, for a few seconds, a look of surprise, which shewed that he evidently doubted what I had stated respecting my knowledge of the sequel of his narrative.—"As I was saying, Mr. Martin was raised from his bed at six in the morning, and presented himself to Atkinson and Miss Ashton in his nightgown and slippers, and his bald head covered with a black velvet cap. Whilst waiting for him, they had occupied themselves in admiring the beauty of the garden, into which the library, where they had been ushered, opened. The Manse, I was told, was most romantically situated on the banks of the river Esk, close to the church ; and, as the minister was a bachelor, and a man of taste, he had formed the whole of his little grounds to harmonize with the surrounding scenery ; which is, I believe,

the most beautiful, as far as wood and water can contribute to the beauty of landscape, that the North can boast."

"I know the spot well," said I; "the moss-roses, the anemonies, the violets, polyanthuses, campanulas, violets, dahlias, and holy-hocks of the parsonage-garden, were the pride of the old man's heart. The spot was indeed a little Paradise, where, like another Adam, with the same pure, simple, unsuspecting, guileless bosom, he weeded his borders and trimmed his flowers, his feelings overflowing with gratitude to the Almighty Being who arrayed them in all their beauty, and who framed him also with the warmest feelings of philanthropy, that embraced the whole human race. His delight was in exercising his power of doing good; and so completely contented was he with the lot that had fallen to him in this world, that he even did not perceive how greatly it circumscribed the sphere of his active benevolence."

"By Gad! Doctor, there are few such characters—I now see the source of your own kindly affections;—but, to proceed with my story."

After the first salutations were over, and Mr. Atkinson had stated to him that the object of his visit to him was to get married, the

worthy pastor, who had fixed his gaze so intensely upon Miss Ashton as to make her blush deeply, approached her, and, taking her by the hand, and smiling kindly as she averted her face from his inquiring look—

“ ‘And so you wish to be married, my dear young lady?’ said he. ‘You are very young, too young, to have seriously considered the step which you have taken; for I presume you are from England, and have been at Gretna?—You are silent, my dear young lady!—I fear, indeed, you have taken a very indiscreet step.—Have you a mother alive?—Have you thought what she must be suffering?—and your father, poor man, who most probably has doated upon you,—at least, I would, were I blessed with a child so pretty and so innocent, for I cannot think that such a form can cover a vitiated or tainted bosom.’

“ ‘This allusion to her parents, more especially to her deceased mother, filled the eyes of Miss Ashton with tears.

“ ‘Nay, my dear young lady, my question was not meant to distress you.’

“ ‘Do spare her feelings,’ said Mr. Atkinson, as he supported her, and felt her tears drop upon his hand. ‘We are betrothed to one another—nothing can separate us—and we

only desire to be united by those sacred ties that the church can bestow: we cannot bear to be married by the brutal sot that we saw at Gretna.'

" 'I am sure you could not,' rejoined the worthy pastor, enclosing the hand of Miss Ashton, which he still held, in both his hands; 'I am sure you would never have forgiven yourself if you had: but you have not breakfasted?—I always breakfast at seven.' And, on saying this, the good old man rung the bell.

" 'Nay, my dear Sir,' said Mr. Atkinson, we have no time to spare; if you will kindly marry us, we must return directly to London; my leave of absence was only for five days, and three of them have expired.'

" 'Then you cannot be married by me,' replied the clergyman: 'you have mistaken;—you have been misinformed. I am a minister of the established Kirk of Scotland; my gown would be torn from my shoulders, were I to act as you wish; and, indeed, my conscience never would allow me to aid in forwarding such clandestine unions.'

" This rebuke of the worthy pastor spread a deep blush over Miss Ashton; whilst Mr. Atkinson stood like the statue of disappointment and despair: both seemed humbled to

the dust, as the folly of their indiscretion was pointed out by the minister. This was enough to awaken all the kindly sympathies of the old man ; and, after gazing upon them for a few minutes in silence, he again gently took the hand of Miss Ashton, and thus addressed her :—

“ ‘ My dear young lady, it is not in me to make others unhappy, much less one whose smile is so expressive of innocence. I can appreciate your feelings—I know the picture of unalloyed happiness that the future presents to your imagination ; and, with all these enthusiastic and romantic sentiments, I admire the resolution that you have taken not to be united to the object who has raised them, and is apparently so worthy of your affection, except by those vows that are consecrated by the sanction of our holy faith. I love to aid happiness—the happiness of the young—not to blight it. I will marry you upon one condition only, namely, that you domesticate yourself with me for a fortnight ; until the end of which time, this gentleman shall go back to London ; and if he then return and claim you as his wife, you shall be so by the most sacred of ties.’ ”

“ Miss Ashton was young and inexperienced in the affairs of the world ; the love that swelled in her bosom was the first she had ever expe-

rienced, the sentiment was unsophisticated : and, although her good sense responded to the propriety of Mr. Martin's suggestion, yet she was too natural and sincere not to display that she felt as if about to be deprived of the very soul of her existence, should Mr. Atkinson leave her among strangers. For many months, not a day had passed in which the lovers had not met ; they had fully understood each other ; and, now, that she had abandoned herself,—how very indiscreetly, the poignancy of her self-reproaches sufficiently told her,—to his honour, the sympathetic look which he turned upon her, as if to read her thoughts, endeared him still more to her. The delicious draught that had intoxicated her seemed about to be dashed from her lips : she felt, she knew not why, that this absence was like a prelude to something which lay wrapped up in futurity, that she dared not to investigate.

“ The proposition of the old Clergyman fell like a thunder-bolt upon Atkinson ; but he saw clearly that he must either submit or consent to give up the idol, before whose shrine he had worshipped with a devotion which had exceeded all reasonable bounds. Now, however, for a moment, he seemed as awakened from a rapturous dream : he had never thought of

the effect of marrying in his circumstances ; he had given himself up solely to the charm which love had thrown around him : for although hitherto he had been a rake, who never reflected that the domination of a woman lies in the exercise of prudence and virtue, yet, even after having persuaded her to elope with him, and having whispered her into the belief, that the sympathies that bound them were holier than the respect which she owed to her relation, Lady Fancourt, or even her duty to her father, he knew enough of the world to be assured, that affection, however sincere, would not support a family. He felt that the paradise which he had painted, and which he saw she conceived was to render permanent the delight of those blissful moments they had spent together, would soon suffer a metamorphose, sufficient, perhaps, to embitter the remainder of their lives, and to call down upon him the reproaches of one whose smile of approbation and love was as yet to him the light, the blissful felicity of heaven.

“ Happy, by Gad ! Doctor, it would have been for all parties, if these reflections had sunk deeper into his mind ; but, like most men of talent, Atkinson was an imaginative being ; and the imploring look which Miss Ashton cast

upon him, as she gazed in his face to ascertain the effect which the proposal of old Martin had produced, dissipated in a moment all his contemplations of the future, and determined him to abide the consequences, whatever they might turn up.

“ The parting of the lovers took place that afternoon ; and Mr. Atkinson returned to his regimental duties in the metropolis, whilst Caroline Ashton, under the protection of Miss Peggy Martin, a sedate person of sixty-four, the maiden sister of the worthy minister, was for a time the loveliest inmate that the parsonage of Langholm had ever sheltered. I have heard that Miss Peggy gave Miss Ashton much excellent advice ; but, by Gad ! Doctor, it was thrown away upon her. The honest parson displayed the deepest interest in her, in the most delicate manner : he never alluded to the indiscreet step she had taken ; but, in daily leading her round his garden, and descanting on the beauties of the flowers, or in their evening walks along the banks of the Esk, he turned her thoughts gently from herself. The old man was charmed with his temporary ward, and took great pleasure in studying her character ; but he could not sound its depth. With all the delicacy and softness of the wo-

man, with a voice the music of which might have suited an inhabitant of heaven, with the smile of an angel, and that description of beauty which fascinates not so much by the perfection and harmony of features as by its sweetness of expression, Miss Ashton possessed a decision of character which made her plan her own course of life, regardless of the opinion of others; and enabled her to triumph under disappointments that, whilst they sometimes threw over her a momentary sadness, only gave additional energy to her resolutions. The sublime, but proud sentiment—

“ What matter where, if I be still the same! * ”

was that which upheld her spirits, and was the spring of all her actions. She had a cultivated feeling for the beauties of Nature: but they were regarded only, as it were, with a side glance, whilst the whole intensity of her thoughts rested upon the accomplishment of her wishes,—in the present instance,—her union with the object of her affection. In her rambles, therefore, with the kind-hearted Minister, he vainly essayed to produce that feeling which was the great comfort of his own existence ;

* Paradise Lost.

namely—a deep-rooted sentiment of gratitude to the Divine Dispenser of the richly luxuriant scene which every where met their gaze. She accorded with the enthusiastic expressions of the good old man ; and smiled kindly upon him, when the gratitude which glowed in his bosom filled his eyes with moisture ; but her mind was far distant, and she often seemed absorbed in a reverie that the worthy Minister was too obtuse to observe, until he found that the conversation he was addressing to her obtained no reply. On such occasions he would stop, turn towards her, and, whilst he gazed on her countenance, and marked a tear stealing from under her long, dark eye-lashes, he would take her hand, and endeavour to cheer her spirits, by remarking that, like the viewless wind, Time imperceptibly was ever stealing on ; and would soon bring round the moment on which all her thoughts rested—that which should restore to her the presence of her lover.

“ It was in one of these evening walks along the banks of the Esk—the meadows were smiling in their richest verdure ; the trees, that in many places deepened, by their reflected shade, the mirror of the placid stream, were varied by the brighter green of the midsummer shoots

on their darker foliage ; and the transparent blue of the sky was beautifully softening, and harmonizing into the warm purple clouds, fringed with the richest gold, that skirted the west—that the worthy pastor selected as a fitting opportunity to sound the real state of his ward's affection. His daily intercourse with her had informed him of the difficulties likely, to accrue from this union, in a pecuniary point of view : it was not certain that the father of Miss Ashton would extend his forgiveness for a match so imprudently and inconsiderately entered upon ; and as the young man had nothing but his commission, with habits that were ill calculated to accommodate themselves to the straits that a marriage, under such circumstances, was likely to impose, the worthy Minister conceived that he would only be doing an act of Christian duty to break off the proposed match, provided that he found the affections of Miss Ashton were not so deeply involved as to render such an attempt utterly futile.

“ ‘ My dear lady,’ said he, gently retaining the hand which he had drawn through his arm, ‘ will you forgive me for asking whether you have seriously considered the nature of the union you are entering into ?—you know that,

when taken, it is irretrievable. I believe that Mr. Atkinson is an excellent young man, that he possesses all the virtues which your vivid imagination beholds in him ; that his affection is of the purest and most ardent description, and that his constancy will remain unshaken ; yet I would have you weigh well the difficulties that surround the matrimonial state, hampered by narrow circumstances. Tell me, have you ventured upon a perspective view of your situation, should Providence bestow upon you a family, without that fortune which you might expect from your father, were you to marry with his consent ; but which, should he not approve your marriage, he may deprive you of for ever ? It is not too—'

“ ‘ Stop, Mr. Martin !’ said she, hastily withdrawing her arm from his ; ‘ this is a subject upon which I cannot permit you to proceed. Were you aware of my character, you would not venture to mention what you were about to urge : I love Mr. Atkinson better than my life—I have looked at the consequences of my alliance with him in every point of view—I am ready to suffer every privation it can subject me to ; and, aware of these, and that my father would never consent to our union, I have taken that step for which I anticipate the

severest censure of many of my own sex, and the utmost displeasure of my dear father; yet I never will recall it. I must be the wife of Mr. Atkinson, or cease to exist:—if he prove faithless, I shall never again believe in the fidelity of man; but even the possibility of that could not, now, alter my resolution.’

“ ‘ But, my dear lady,—’

“ ‘ Nay; no argument, my kind friend, can change me. If I be the victim of Imagination, as you suppose, what my judgment has decided, my inclination impels me to fulfil: if I have committed myself, the execution of my intention cannot be relinquished; the step I have taken is irretrievable.’

“ It was impossible, after this avowal of her determination, for the old man to offer any further advice. By Gad! Doctor, although it is an old saying, that women have less inflexibility of character than men, yet, in some points, they bid defiance to danger, brave contempt and ridicule, and display the most immoveable obstinacy.”

“ Call it not obstinacy, my dear Sir,” said I; “ it is the invincibility of moral courage, which shines forth in the female character when the mind is made up to the performance of a particular line of conduct. I do not contend for

the soundness of the judgment that plans the enterprize ; but, like a real hero, when a woman has taken her decision, she systematically dismisses every stipulation for safety, and voluntarily presses forward within the precincts of danger, more willing to feed than to quench the fire of action. It is this determined fortitude that has produced so many self-devoted victims among the tender sex, whether the object has been friendship, or love, or religion."

" Well, well, Doctor ! you may set up for a knight in romance," said the Veteran ; " as for me," he continued, " I am a sober reasoner, who judges of both sexes through their actions. What you term self-devotion, I regard as the mere ascendancy of imagination over sound judgment ; what you consider the invincibility of moral courage, is, in my opinion, little better than obstinacy, stimulated by a heated fancy to commit actions of any kind, even those bordering on the wildest extravagance. Women seldom discern things as they really are :—Imagination throws its colours over coming events, like the cloud scenery of a summer evening—but, although the fictitious forms melt away, yet, the disenchantment is often too late ; the eye has been blinded by the dazzling prospect, and it becomes unfit again to contemplate the common-place materials of the actual world

—but I have done. I will admit that it was inexperience which misled Miss Ashton; and I shall resume my narrative.

“ Mr. Atkinson arrived on the following day, and the amiable Pastor of Langholm joined the hands of the lovers, by that authority which says—‘ whom God has united let no man put asunder.’

“ It is unnecessary, as it would be impossible for me to describe the feelings of all the parties on this occasion—the visionary expectations of unalloyed happiness in the heated imaginations of the young couple; the more rational presentiment of disappointment of their hopes that occupied the thoughts of the worthy Minister; and the agreeable anticipation of being again left free to follow her old jog-trot, domestic habits, that cheered the sober mind of Miss Peggy Martin.

“ The old Minister, however, possessed a degree of romantic sentimentality, derived from his retired life, and an imagination naturally vivid, combined with great warmth of affection: there was no selfishness in his composition; nothing misanthropic; not a particle of indifference in his nature. He had felt the deepest interest in Miss Ashton: her society had even awakened sentiments in his bosom that had long remained at rest, and recalled

feelings of an early period of the good man's life, which had deeply tintured the future, and fixed his destiny as a bachelor. The pain of parting with one whose presence had thus touched the chord of a fondly-cherished sentiment, and with whom he could not promise to himself the luxury of again meeting in this world, pressed upon his heart; and he had scarcely power to place her hand in Mr. Atkinson's as he gave her to him, and pronounced the short blessing, which is customary in the cold ceremonial of the Scottish Kirk.

“ Every thing being ready, the old man handed the bride into the carriage, and as he applied his lips to her cheek, he hoped she would occasionally think of old Martin; and assured her that it would be impossible to obliterate the impression which she had made on his affection. He recommended Atkinson to cherish her love, as she was now most truly his own: he reminded him how much she had sacrificed for him; and he added, that he should be greatly deceived indeed, if he did not possess in her a treasure which he could not too highly appreciate. The young people, being seated in the carriage, the old man stretched out his arms in an Apostolic manner, and, with a tear glistening in his eye, bestowed upon them this benedic-

tion—‘ May the Almighty Dispenser of good, bless and protect you.’ Both parties felt as they ought to do on such an occasion ; and returning their grateful thanks for all his kindness, they warmly shook the hand of the old man for the last time, and drove off.”

“ Before you proceed, tell me,” said I, “ what became of Lady Fancourt ? I am curious, to hear how she bore the disappointment of not finding her niece ?”—

“ I really know little about it,” replied the Veteran ; “ I have heard that Sir Charles did every thing to persuade her Ladyship not to lose the opportunity, which their arrival at Gretna-hall afforded, of terminating her widowhood ; and, as the young couple had eluded pursuit, he urged her to conclude their journey north, by bestowing upon him her hand, as a reward for his long-tried devotion to her Ladyship. He protested that he had never spent three days more agreeably than those that had fled so rapidly in her delightful society.

“ ‘ It has indeed been perfect felicity,’ said the old beau,’ with his usual smirk and lisp ; ‘ ’pon my soul it has !—the charming society, the amiable attentions of your Ladyship, have touched the chord of my affections:—is it presumption to hope that your heart will respond

to feelings so devoted, so genuine, so long-tried ?—do not, my dear Lady Fancourt, do not shipwreck my fondest hopes !—when with one little affirmative, you can scatter the clouds of doubt that have obscured the heaven of my wishes—one little word—’pon my soul, I ask no more !—its magic power can change the sterile dreariness of life to a sunny landscape—the dark uncertainty of night to the golden dawn of felicitous day.’

“ The Baronet paused to ascertain the effect of this highly-spiced appeal, which, as it had cost much thought in the engendering, he conceived would be quite irresistible : but Lady Fancourt had too much understanding—she was too correct a judge of intellect in others, and viewed the picture of life with too cool and discriminating an eye, to be entrapped in so flimsy a springe, or to sympathize with such a poor specimen of humanity as Sir Charles Stiffney. She smiled at the extravagance of his passionate rhapsody ; told him, that at his age, she usually found sentiment in the wane, and the airy creations of fancy arrested by the sobriety of reason ; but he was an exception to the general rule ; and, patting him on the cheek, she assured him that, although she was quite overpowered by the sublimity of his metaphors, yet they were unequal

to shake her firm resolution never again to fetter herself in the chains of matrimony.

“ The disappointed Baronet looked phlegmatically tranquil under his discomfiture : he, however, assured her Ladyship, that her sentence would prove his death-blow—‘ ’pon my soul ! I feel it as such.’ Her Ladyship was, nevertheless, inexorable; and she left him to brood over his disappointment, and to tranquillize himself, as he had done on a score of similar occasions, by letting loose his imagination, and drawing his consolation from the ideal future ; the contemplation of which had ever been the counterpoize to all his actual griefs.

“ By Gad ! Doctor,” continued the Veteran, “ the old Beau was right ; to do him justice, he was a philosopher ; for what else can we term him who sinks the practical part of life in the visionary—who finds, that if the world has many evils, it contains also many comforts ; and that, if joy be fleeting, misery is not immoveable ?

“ Both parties returned to the metropolis in perfect good humour with each other ; and, with Monsieur Louis and my Lady’s maid, were set down in Portland Place, exactly eight days after they had left it. In truth, independent of her Ladyship’s contempt for the intellect of the Baronet, her passions were

already turned into another channel ; and, in two months afterwards, her hand was bestowed upon a wealthy Banker, the weight of whose purse overbalanced every defect of either person or of mind ; absolved her from the cares of domestic arrangements, and enabled her to attract to her parties all that was fashionable and gay.

“ You know, my good friend, that it is not necessary, in the circles of fashion, for husband and wife to assimilate, either in temper or in pursuits : the Banker was rich, egotistical, contracted, and contradictory :—Lady Fancourt was clever, wayward, and romantic, having no sympathy with human life, as far as regards its serious duties and rational interests ; making use of the world only as affording subjects of sarcasm and wit ; and aspiring to engross the beams of the leading-stars among the lighter spirits of life. You may readily suppose that two greater extremes, two more complete contrasts, were never jostled together. Sir Charles maintained his part with both : he was the nightly visitant of the Lady’s drawing-room or her opera-box ; and drank the champagne of the husband twice a week, whilst he yawned over his account of party intrigues and their influence upon the price of stocks. All three have been called to their last account ; and,

by Gad ! far be it from me to say one word more than my story requires, of the contracted selfishness, the misery of satiety, and the nervousness of dissipation which they shared amongst them.

“ With respect to Atkinson and his wife, the experience of a few months awoke their minds to the folly of the step which they had taken. Mr. Ashton, who had arrived in England, refused to see either party, or to forgive his daughter ; he returned to America with my wife ; who, as she became the sole object of his parental solicitude, inherited, as you know, the whole of his ample fortune. As Atkinson’s difficulties increased, his libertine habits began again to obtain their ascendancy over him ; he became more and more neglectful of his wife, whose high spirit, for some time, struggled against the indignities that she suffered from both her husband and her aunt ; but it at length gave way, when, on his regiment being ordered abroad, he recommended her to look out for a situation as a governess ; and left her with a pittance scarcely sufficient to procure for her the ordinary wants of life. At the end of a year, she gave birth to a daughter, which, before it was three months old, was placed in the hands of Lady Fancourt ; and, at her death, was transferred to

the care of my wife. Caroline Ashton, for she was never called Atkinson, was that infant:—her beauty, her talents, and her amiable disposition have endeared her to us as a daughter; and, by Gad!” said the Veteran, pretending to wipe his spectacles on his nose, whilst he dried a tear that started in his eye, “I am not sure that I do not love her better than my own child. I never could ascertain,” continued he, “what became of her mother: a veil of mystery has separated her from the knowledge of all her relations:—the old man never mentioned her name, and my wife is totally ignorant of every incident of her history from the moment that Atkinson went abroad. Her career, indeed, I fear added another to the many lamentable proofs of the evils resulting from the ascendancy of imagination over sober reason—of dreaming of felicity beyond the destiny of common mortals”.

CHAPTER IX.

“———— *thou* amidst the bright and fair
 Whispering light words, and mocking my despair?
 It is not well of thee!—my love was more
 Than fiery song may breathe, deep thought explore;
 And there thou smilest while my heart is dying,
 With all its blighted hopes around it lying;
 Even thou————”

FELICIA HEMANS.

WHAT the Colonel had narrated, removed a thick veil of mystery that had hung over a very interesting incident in my life. The infant of whose birth he had spoken, and whom I had in truth welcomed into existence, was the beautiful and fascinating young woman who had so deeply interested me by the striking likeness to one whom I did not suspect to be her mother; and who was, besides, the niece of my excellent friend Colonel Standard. The sequel of the history of her unfortunate parent, as I stated to the Veteran, was well known to me; and I shall now give it a place in this jour-

nal. It is one of those romances of real life which throw the fictitious into the shade ; and of which medical men are, not unfrequently, involuntary spectators.

“ It was a clear morning in July, not a cloud stained the blue ether into which the rising sun shot up his beam ; the atmosphere was peculiarly transparent, owing to the rain which had fallen on the previous day ; and the freshness of the air spread a delightful and invigorating sensation over even the streets of the metropolis. The clock of St. James’s church had just struck four, when Captain Hugh Cameron issued from the Clarendon Hotel. Having the night before engaged a place in the coach which departed at five for Plymouth, where he was to embark to join his regiment, then in the Peninsula ; he had sent onwards his servant, with his great-coat and portmanteau, to wait for him at Hyde Park-corner, where the coach was to take him up.

“ Delighted with the enlivening feeling which the early morning produced, and being much too soon for the coach, the young officer walked leisurely along Piccadilly, meditating on the quietness and repose of the street, enhanced by the circumstance of its being Sunday, compared with the noise and bustle which it

displays in the busy period of the day. He had proceeded nearly half way along the street without meeting an individual ; when his attention was suddenly roused by a light step hastily approaching ; and, turning round to ascertain who it was, a lady rapidly passed him. Her movement was so quick, that he had no opportunity of observing her countenance ; and she seemed to hurry onwards with a pace between running and walking, without looking on either side. There would have been nothing surprising in this : Captain Cameron conjectured that she was one of those wretched creatures whom the villainy of our sex throws out of the society of their own, returning home from some scene of midnight dissipation. Her dress and appearance, however, indicated that he was mistaken ; and his curiosity was, consequently, excited by the circumstance of a modest woman hurrying through the streets at that early hour.

‘ She is, perhaps,’ said he, thinking aloud, ‘ hastening for medical assistance for some sick friend :—but what is it to me who or what she is ?—what interest can I feel in the business of an utter stranger, whom I may never see again whilst I live ?’

Such were his thoughts, yet he almost un-

consciously quickened his pace ; and a desire, which he could not explain, to know something of this person, suddenly possessed his mind.

“ Although the young officer had walked smartly for some minutes, yet the lady had gained upon him. She turned into Hyde Park, and he shuddered on perceiving it, for an idea that she was going to commit suicide at that instant crossed his mind. He therefore ran forward ; but, before he entered the park gate, she was already tracking her way over the dewy grass, to the opposite bank of the Serpentine. He followed at a respectable distance, until he observed her sit down upon the protruded roots of one of the old elms, and rest her forehead upon her hand. His suspicion was now confirmed ; yet he hesitated to address the wretched woman, until, as she raised her head, gazing wildly around, he perceived that she was aware of his presence. As he advanced towards her, she started up, ran forwards a few paces, then looked fearfully behind ; stopped ;—and seated herself on the grass in the same attitude as before.

“ The young soldier had seen enough to awaken all his sympathy : he approached her in the most respectful manner ; and was satisfied that she was not only a lady, but, although

clouded with anxiety and anguish, yet, that her face was eminently beautiful and lovely.

“ ‘ I perceive, Madam,’ said he, addressing her, ‘ that you are suffering under deep distress of mind—I am a gentleman and an officer—can I serve you in any way ?’

“ ‘ The greatest service, Sir,’ she replied, without lifting her eyes from the ground, ‘ that you can perform to me is, to leave me to myself.’

“ Captain Cameron bowed, and withdrew : but the intense interest which was now lighted up in his bosom for the fate of this unhappy stranger, prevented him from leaving the spot ; and, therefore, placing himself out of view, behind a tree, he determined to watch her movements, and, if possible, to frustrate the fatal event which he justly conjectured she meditated.

“ Half an hour elapsed, and she remained seated on the grass in the same position, her forehead resting upon her hand :—at length, the sound of the horn of the coach, which waited for him at the appointed place, having reached the ear of the young man, he looked round, only for a moment ; when, on again turning his eye in the direction of the object which detained, and so deeply interested him, the spot

where she was seated was vacant, and his eye caught the last glimpse of her white dress as she plunged into the water. It was the work of an instant to disencumber himself from his coat, and to dive into the river : but, although Cameron was an expert swimmer, yet, ten minutes passed before he found the body. He bore it to the shore, and, laying it upon the grass, he gazed for a few seconds upon the lovely features and delicate form, now apparently inanimate in death.

“ ‘ Good God ! why did I allow that accursed horn to arrest my attention ?—I might have saved her !—it is too late !—what is to be done ?’

“ With such reflections in his mind, he gazed around, and hallooed for assistance ; but none appeared :—not a person was within sight or hearing—he, therefore, lifted the body in his arms, and conveyed it to the receiving-house of the Humane Society, in the immediate vicinity, where it was instantly admitted, and a messenger despatched to the barracks for the surgeon and some of the soldiers, to assist in the process of resuscitation.

“ The more the young officer gazed upon the object of his solicitude, the more anxious he became that every effort should be tried

which promised the slightest hope of reanimation : every minute seemed an hour :— his patience was soon exhausted ; and, without waiting for the surgeon, he persuaded the woman of the house and her servant, as a warm bed had been already prepared, to undress the body and to commence frictions with hot flannels. He then sat down in the adjoining apartment, to ponder on the singular adventure in which he had borne so important a share.

“ ‘ If she recover,’ thought he, ‘ I shall be amply repaid for my wetting, and the loss of the coach. Poor young creature ! what must have been her mental suffering before she could resolve on such a step ?’

“ ‘ She is reviving, Sir !’—said the woman of the house, bursting into the room ;—‘ what shall we do now ?’

“ ‘ Continue your operations,’ replied the young man, ‘ until the surgeon arrives.’

“ In a few minutes afterwards, I was in the house ; for I was then attached to the medical staff of the Life Guards, who occupied the barracks ; and I was enabled to confirm the satisfactory intelligence of the poor lady’s resuscitation. Cameron, who up to that moment, as he afterwards told me, felt cool and collected, was now quite overcome ; and, exclaiming—

‘ thank Heaven !—thank Heaven,’—he sunk upon the floor and fainted. He was easily recovered ; and, having explained to him that this fit was the consequence of the excitement which he had previously undergone, I urged him to permit me to send to my rooms for dry clothes, as he was still in the state in which he had emerged from the water. He accepted my offer, and begged that his servant, who he supposed was waiting for him at Hyde Park-corner, might be sent to, and directed to bring a coach.

“ ‘ May I see this unfortunate being before I go ?—I am certain she is a person of respectable connexions ; and it would gratify me to know who she is. I leave town to night :—the vessel, in which I am to embark to join my regiment on the Peninsula, is expected to sail from Plymouth in a few days.’

“ I explained to the young Officer the necessity of leaving my patient to repose at this time ; but I assured him that he might safely satisfy his curiosity in the afternoon, and that I would meet him, for that purpose, at five o’clock ; after which, I hoped he would be my guest at the mess-dinner, as the mail could take him up at the gate of the barracks. He accepted my invitation ; and, having adjourned

to my rooms, he changed his clothes, and we walked together to Hyde Park-corner, where his servant was waiting.

“ At the appointed hour, Cameron was at the receiving-house, all anxiety to see again the interesting being whom he had saved ; and, as I had already ascertained that my patient was sufficiently recovered to support the interview, I ushered him into the apartment. For a few seconds, the eye of the unfortunate lady wandered over the person of the young Officer : then, as her recognition of him became clear, a death-like paleness overspread her countenance, and she hid her face in the pillow. Cameron approached the bed, and took her hand : for a few minutes, not a word was spoken on either side ; at length breaking the silence—

“ ‘ This, my dear Madam,’ said I, ‘ is the gentleman to whose generous exertions you owe your life.’

“ ‘ I know it ;’ she replied, without raising her face from the pillow.

“ ‘ May I hope,’ said the young Officer, ‘ to render my services still further useful ?’

“ There was a kindliness in the manner of uttering these few words, which seemed to rouse all the grateful feelings of the wretched

being to whom they were addressed. She turned round, and grasping the hand of Cameron in both of hers, she pressed it fervently to her lips. The gaze of the young man, who was most powerfully struck with the loveliness of her countenance, raised a transient blush as her eye met his; and although it beamed with a faint smile, yet there was an evident expression of unutterable wretchedness beneath that of the gratitude which it was meant to convey.

“ ‘It is an empty offer,’ continued he, ‘for I must, unfortunately, leave London this evening: but may I venture to ask the name of one in whose fate I cannot but feel the deepest interest?’

“ She made no reply, but rested her forehead upon his hand, which she still grasped.

“ ‘I do not wish, I have no right, Madam,’ continued he, ‘to inquire into the mystery of your distress: but is it too much to desire to know who you are?’

“ She remained silent: but, as the young Soldier pressed his enquiry, she loosened her hand from his, and, raising her eyes with a look of agony, replied—

“ ‘I regret that I am constrained to deny any thing to one to whom I owe such a debt of gratitude.’

“ Captain Cameron felt the impropriety of urging further his request: he gazed for a few seconds upon the lovely countenance which was turned on him, and whose full eye and faint smile spoke the sincerity of the feeling which had dictated the reply that silenced him; and pressing her hand, which she again extended to him, he took his leave, saying, that he was satisfied that he left her in the care of a gentleman and a man of honour; and that Dr. Mac Alpine would not only watch over her recovery, but would afford her every consolation which her unhappy situation might require.

“ She thanked him with a look that I can never forget; and, as we quitted the room, I perceived that her forehead had sunk upon her hand, and her countenance displayed an expression of utter wretchedness; an expression which, although indelibly imprinted on my memory, yet, cannot be described in words.

“ As Cameron and I walked together to the barracks, he informed me that the regiment in which he was an officer, was in the Peninsula; that he had come home to settle some family affairs; and that, if he had not already exceeded his leave of absence, nothing would have prevented him from doing every thing in

his power to place the unfortunate being whom he had so providentially rescued, in the hands of her friends.

“ ‘ There is something in that lovely and unfortunate woman which interests my feelings most powerfully,’ continued the young man; ‘ she is certainly a gentlewoman ; and, my dear Sir, you will confer upon me a lasting obligation if you will write to me the result of your enquiries respecting her.’

“ I promised Captain Cameron that I would not fail to comply with his request, and that I should not lose sight of my patient until I had found out her friends. Our conversation, after dinner, chiefly regarded her ; and, at nine o’clock, when he stepped into the mail, we parted as if we had been old and intimate acquaintances. There was an open, generous frankness in the young man which delighted me, and I could not avoid fancying that the event which had occurred had made an impression upon his heart which would not easily be obliterated.

“ On the following morning, when I called at the receiving-house, I found my patient up and dressed. The effects of her submersion had subsided ; her loveliness and elegance

were more apparent, than the day before ; and the melancholy which hung over her, rather added than diminished the interest which she could not fail to excite in every one who saw her. She gracefully bowed her head as I entered the apartment, and replied to my enquiries after her health and feelings in a satisfactory manner : but she preserved a determined silence to every question respecting her name or family.

“ It was impossible that the poor lady could remain where she was ; and yet, as no information could be obtained of her family, a question arose—what was to be done with her ?—The keeper of the Humane Society’s house suggested sending her to Mount Street Workhouse ; but to this proposition I could not consent, seeing that she was a lady, and her manners were evidently those of refined society : I, therefore, had her removed to a lodging in Knightsbridge ; and expected, in a few days, through the medium of the newspapers, either to bring forward her relations, or to prevail on her to divulge her name and circumstances. Alas ! in less than two days, she became insane.

“ It required no medical skill to perceive that the wretchedness of life was the only picture present to the mind of my poor unknown ;

and that it was the desire of escaping from this condition, whatever might be its origin, which had impelled her to attempt suicide.

“ What if some little payne the passage have,
That makes frail flesh to fear the bitter wave ?
Is not short payne well borne that brings long ease,
And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave ?” *

To such delusive reasonings had she listened, until the delirium they induced had overpowered her judgement ; and, therefore, I was not surprized at the result.

“ The landlady of the lodging, whom I had engaged to sit with her, and who had sent for me, told me that she had done nothing but sigh, day and night, ever since she had entered her house ; that she seemed immersed in deep thought ; and never moved :—on the first night she was obliged to put her to bed, where she had since then remained, as she refused to get up, and even to take nourishment.

“ ‘ Poor, young, innocent dear !—I would do any thing to serve her—her smile is so beautiful. You may depend upon it,’ continued the kind-hearted woman, ‘ there is something pressing upon her heart.’

“ ‘ Has she not,’ said I, ‘ made any allusion to her friends ?’

* Spencer.

“ ‘ Heaven bless her! Sir,’ replied she, ‘ not a word has passed her lips until this morning, a few minutes before she appeared so wild :— she then sobbed, just for all the world like a hysterical, most piteously ; and afterwards muttered, ‘ Where shall we go ?—where ?—where ?’ I could have sat down and cried with her—it is some disappointment in love—she is broken-hearted, Sir !’

“ There was apparently much truth in the good woman’s remark ; but, from seeing a marriage ring on the stranger’s finger, I was more disposed to attribute the malady to some domestic affliction, than to love. On contemplating its victim, I could not avoid reflecting how frequently an erroneous education is the most influential cause of insanity, particularly in females. Excessive indulgence, and a defect of moral discipline, engender caprice and violent passions, which lay a ground-work, or, in medical language, form a predisposition to the disease in the moral affections of the person ; and the higher the scale of intellect in the individual, the stronger the predisposition operates. How little do parents reflect, when pushing to the utmost, the mental powers of the child, that they are sacrificing its physical and moral health.

“ When I entered the apartment of the poor

maniac, she was sitting up in bed, moving her body with a slow, pendulous motion, and her eyes staring upon vacuity. I tried to arrest her attention, but it was in vain: she seemed utterly unconscious of anything around her, and the hysterical fit, which the landlady mentioned, had terminated in a mild, low delirium, in which the ideas, passing through the brain, were giving rise to imperfect and incoherent sentences.

“ ‘ Do you mourn ?’ said she, in a low tone of voice : and then, laughing wildly, she sung, in a sweet and plaintive measure—

‘ O, mourn no longer,
Death is strong, but love is stronger !’*

From this turn, which the insanity had assumed, it was possible that the poor maniac might soon become the subject of violent excitement ; and, consequently, besides the medical management which the case demanded, it was necessary to place her under the care of a person accustomed to the treatment of the insane : a keeper was consequently procured, and the assistance of a physician of eminence in mental affections, was called in.

“ In this manner five months passed away,

* Kerfaludy, the Hungarian Petrarch.

without any decided improvement in the condition of our patient ; whilst, at the same time, it became as evident that she would soon become a mother. The bloom of health and of beauty had nearly disappeared from her cheek ; her round, and beautifully oval face had grown thin and emaciated ; the eye was sunk within its hollow socket ; and the countenance was pale and dejected. During all this time, not the smallest information had been obtained who, or whence she was. On many occasions, the wild and alarming aspect of her countenance, excited an apprehension that the attack would terminate in furious and permanent mania : but a benevolent Providence decided otherwise : the light of reason again shed its beams upon the mind of the unfortunate lady ; and made us acquainted with her melancholy story.

“ Mrs. Atkinson—for it was she—the same Caroline Ashton, whose story the Veteran had detailed to me, that had been thus driven, by excessive grief, domestic sorrow, and disappointed hopes, to attempt suicide,—now informed us of her relationship to Lady Fancourt. I knew nothing of her Ladyship ; but the same excellent physician, to whose kind, unremitting attention the recovery of our poor patient was chiefly to be attributed, was ac-

quainted with her ; and undertook the task of waiting upon her, both to inform her of the situation of her niece, and to concert measures for her restoration to her family. Our hopes in both instances were frustrated : her Ladyship would not see her unhappy relative ; but she wrote to her father, whose name neither our patient nor Lady Fancourt would divulge, and who, we were told, was inexorable.

“ After four months’ negociation, this unnatural parent agreed merely to allow her a small annuity, provided she would give up her child, who was then three months’ old ; and that she would endeavour to obtain the situation of a governess in some respectable family, until her husband should return to support her. For some weeks she proudly spurned this proposal ; but, as she had no other means of subsistence than that which we afforded to her—tired out, hopeless, and dismayed by the dark cloud which hung over the future, and contemplating the prospect of the wretchedness of life which must follow her determination not to part with her child, her resolution began to waver. Her religious principles, also, were not the strongest, and, therefore, that gloom and melancholy again settled upon her countenance, which I knew must inevitably terminate in a second

attempt at self-destruction. Could it indeed be otherwise?—it was not the failure of ambitious views, nor false pride, nor the dread of private contempt, that was operating so injuriously on her mind—but she felt that the last hold upon her affection was to be torn from her bosom—the only being that was now dear to her:—her child—was to be exchanged for the pittance which was to sustain her wretched existence.

“ Although I was convinced, that giving up the infant was not only essential, but the sole chance of the unfortunate lady obtaining the means of subsistence as a governess, and was also, probably, the only means that might bring about a reconciliation with her friends, yet I could not urge the separation. I had been present at the birth of the babe; I had seen it laid in the maternal bosom; and, whilst it nestled there, I had witnessed the tears of mingled joy and of sorrow which the mother shed over its entrance into life.

“ ‘ Thy father, my dear infant !’—did she say, as she gazed intently upon it—‘ where is he ?’—then sighing deeply, and pressing the child closely to her bosom, she gave vent to a flood of tears.

“ I am not one of those who affect sanctity ;

but, at such a moment, it was impossible not to acknowledge the counteracting influence which a firm religious reliance on Divine aid would have afforded to the utter despondency which now pressed upon the humbled pride and disappointed hopes of this wretched woman. To that never-failing source of consolation she had not been taught reverently to look up. Her strong and energetic mind could have proudly triumphed over the tyranny of fortune, but it could not perceive, in the wound which her affections had sustained, in the disappointment of cherished wishes, the advantage of that necessary discipline which the paternal wisdom of Providence exercises over mortals; perhaps, in chastening the mind, to wean it from the world, and to refine, and exalt, and fit it for a happier state of existence. But, although the feelings of Mrs. Atkinson were closely allied with the world, yet it was impossible not to sympathize with them. In the very morning of life, she had felt the sting of cold neglect in return for the most ardent love: condemned by the world; cast off by her relations; deserted by the father of her child: if she had erred, her sufferings were more than commensurate to the fault.

“ It was not in me to urge the separation of

the mother and child ; but Dr. B——, who had felt an unusual interest in our joint patient, saw the paramount importance of the measure ; and he persuaded the heart-broken parent that it was the most likely method of pacifying the anger of her father, and procuring that education for her infant which she would necessarily wish it to have, whatever might be her own future condition. With respect to a temporary provision for Mrs. Atkinson herself, I fortunately had it in my power to assist her : a relation of mine, in the north of Scotland, being anxious to obtain the assistance of an accomplished English lady to superintend the education of her daughters.

“ I shall not attempt, because it would be vain, to describe the parting of the mother and her child : the hours she gazed upon it, as it lay in innocent, unconscious slumber upon her knee ; the tears that poured in streams from her eyes ; the sighs that seemed to tear asunder her bosom ; the kisses that were imprinted upon the lips and breast of the sleeping babe ; the many times it was taken back after it was given into the arms of the nurse who was sent for it from Lady Fancourt’s :—how often the mantle in which it lay, was unfolded to permit one more look to the distressed mother ; her

earnest charge to the nurse—‘ O, beseech my aunt to be kind to my darling !’—and the heart-rending shriek that penetrated my very soul, as I handed the nurse with the infant into the carriage, and the wretched mother fell almost lifeless into my arms.

“ A fortnight passed before the afflicted lady recovered sufficient composure of mind to commence preparations for her journey to Scotland. I had called daily in Portland Place to inquire into the health of the infant. After a few days I was told it was sent away ; but I could obtain no information of its destiny from Lady Fancourt, who only assured me that it was safe and well. She displayed, in every reply to my anxious inquiries, the most heartless disposition towards her afflicted niece.

“ ‘ She has selected her own path of life, Dr. Mac Alpine,’ would she say, ‘ and must abide by the consequences.’

“ ‘ But think, Lady Fancourt, of the misery which she has suffered.’

“ ‘ It is the natural consequence of such conduct,’ was her reply ; ‘ and her greatest wisdom is to submit in silence.’

“ ‘ But her father, surely, will not refuse to see the heart-broken sufferer ? I understand he is in this country.’

“ If he take my advice,’ said her Ladyship, ‘ he will not see her at present :—he has a duty to perform to his other daughter : it would be improper to allow the sisters to meet.’

“ I was so shocked with the sentiments of this cold-hearted woman of the world, that I was resolved never again to see her ; and, therefore, I begged that she would inform me of the name and residence of Mrs. Atkinson’s father : but, to this request, her Ladyship returned a decided refusal ; and, until I heard the narrative of the old Colonel, I remained ignorant of the name and parentage of my unhappy patient, who, in detailing her misfortunes, had studiously avoided every allusion to her father.

“ A settled melancholy seemed to be the destiny of this unfortunate woman ; and I dreaded lest it should interfere with the performance of her duties in my friend’s family ; yet, there remained no alternative to this disposal of her. In a week afterwards, every arrangement being effected, I conveyed her to the mail-coach, and placed her under the charge of a gentleman who was going to Edinburgh. I had previously received from her the grateful, heart-felt thanks of a wounded spirit : and, whilst her arms were thrown around my neck, and her tear-bedewed face buried in my bosom,

and I felt the impress of her lips upon my forehead, I bade ‘God bless her,’ shook her by the hand, and saw the last of an individual whose personal charms, energetic, and highly cultivated mind, and amiable and fascinating manners, deserved a better fate: and whose misfortunes made an impression upon my feelings that time has not been able to obliterate.

“She did not long remain in the family of my friend; for, her father having died soon afterwards, she found herself in the possession of an annuity of two hundred a year: and having determined, if possible, to regain her child, she left Scotland. Colonel Standard informed me that she had been in America, soon after he and his family had quitted Savannah; and that he had lately ascertained that she had returned to Europe. He also informed me that, although his family regarded this journey into the Highlands as a mere tour of pleasure, yet he had made it partly with a view of obtaining some account of Mrs. Atkinson. The only information that was at all satisfactory, he had procured from a banker in Edinburgh, through whose hands her annuity was paid; but this gentleman, perhaps afraid that Atkinson would discover her retreat, which he had been endea-

vouring for some time to effect, would say nothing more than that she was in Scotland."

The Veteran, who had in my Journal perused the foregoing account of the sequel of his own story, was urgent in his inquiries, whether I knew any thing more of Atkinson ; and, also, if Cameron were still alive ? I told him that I had seen both of them after the events which he had read of ; and, if he would tax his patience for another hour, he would find, in the Journal, all that I knew of either party.

In order to prepare the reader for this narrative, however, it is necessary for the Editor to inform him of an Episode in the life of his deceased friend, which had shadowed every subsequent moment of it, and laid the foundation of that sombre cast of disposition which now characterized him, and which appeared to the old Colonel completely inexplicable, as it was at variance with the gay, volatile, open, carelessness of his deportment, when he had enjoyed the hospitality and polite attention of the warm-hearted Veteran, during his short residence in America. It was, in truth, an affair of the heart, which induced him, for some

time, to change the lancet for the sword ; and to seek, in the excitement of a military life, relief from thoughts that were undermining both his mental happiness and his physical powers.

In mentioning this event, it is not the intention of the Editor to enter into details, or to record the name of the faithless fair one. Whatever may be the failings of women, infidelity in the tender passion is not often displayed in them : and, although the circumstances, in this instance of it, portrayed a heart of the most sordid kind, and the injury inflicted was sufficient to embitter the remaining years of the poor Doctor's existence, yet, I am certain that it is consonant to the gallantry of his feelings to withhold the name of the lady, and also to touch as lightly as possible upon her failings.

She was a cousin of the Doctor ; had been brought up with him from childhood ; and been always regarded by the friends of both as his future wife : indeed, so thoroughly did they appear to understand one another, that her last letter, received a few hours only before his departure from Savannah for England, to fulfil his engagement by making her his wife, indicated no diminution of attachment. His disappoint-

ment may be more readily conceived than described, at finding, on his arrival in London, that the lady was already the wife of an old man, an East-Indian, who had purchased a baronetcy, and had conferred upon her at once, both title and fortune ; the terms for which she bartered affection and her faith to her lover.

The bitter disappointment of the Doctor may be readily conceived ; for, as Hope is, of all our passions, that which gives the greatest exercise to the imagination, it, also, produces the most poignant suffering when its anticipations fail to be realized. The shock which fell upon my poor friend's mental fabric, almost reduced it to a state of ruin ; and, although he struggled to reconcile himself to his fate, yet such a degree of apathy succeeded, that his friends advised him to leave England ; and, in order to comply with their wishes, he obtained the Surgeoncy of the Forty-second regiment, with which he shared all the glory that was shed upon that band of heroes in the Peninsular war.

The sequel of the story which the Colonel was requested to read, was connected with that period of Dr. Mac Alpine's career in the army. In his Journal it is prefaced by an

Essay upon Looks ; which, however, the Editor has ventured to set aside ; and merely to extract from it one or two paragraphs : but he fears that many of the readers of his friend's opinions, may think that even these would have admitted of curtailment.

CHAPTER X.

“—— whether we shall meet again, I know not,
 Therefore our everlasting farewell take ;
 For ever, and for ever, farewell, *Cassius* !
 If we do meet again, why, we shall smile ;
 If not, why then this parting was well made.

SHAKSPEARE.

“ WHAT a volume of ideas may often be read in a single look ! A man, after half an hour’s reasoning, satisfied that every thing that he has advanced is convincing, unanswerable, before his adversary has said one word to controvert it, may say to himself—‘ ’tis all in vain, I have wasted the breath of my lungs’—his look convinces me that he does not subscribe to one opinion of my argument.

“ In the most ordinary events of life, we are guided by this principle. When I was last at Strasbourg, having sallied out of the Hotel du Saint Esprit, and stood for half an hour before the façade of the cathedral, to admire the rich decorations of its gates and porches, and to wonder at the astounding height of its airy

spire, my mind, some how or other, wandered to the tale of Slawkenbergeus, which Sterne has made so much use of in *Tristram Shandy*. It was a story, dear reader, of a traveller who had been at the Promontory of Noses, and had procured a nasal appendage which set the whole city by the ears. Wrapped up in the story, and forgetting what I was gazing upon, I walked unconsciously onwards until I lost myself, the cathedral, and my road back to the Saint Esprit. The street was full of people : it was a French town, and I felt no lack of words ; yet I could not bring myself to ask my way, until a young woman advanced, whose look suited the occasion, and told me I should not ask in vain ; and I was not mistaken : there was an innocency in it—an expression which promised gentleness and soft responses.

“ ‘I will shew Monsieur the way,’ said she, in the sweetest accent imaginable.

“ I could have followed her to the world’s end :—she only led me to the porch of the Saint Esprit.

“ What is a look, in fact, but a glimpse of the soul, from the temple of her divinity, the brain, beaming through the eyes, and giving a pictured image, a visible, intelligible impress to that which is itself invisible ? Now I consider the faculty of reading looks to be the highest

science, the truest philosophy ; and that to make out from them the real condition of the mind, to descry what invisible ideas are passing through it, should be studied by every one. It enables a man to separate the genuine feelings of the person from the false shows that are put on to mask real sentiments, like the gorgeous air-castles, hovering over the abyss of the north, into which we are told ‘ the hapless traveller is often seduced to enter, and so sinks to rise no more.’ ”

But it is not the intention of the Editor to print here his deceased friend’s *Essay on Looks*; the public shall have it, some day, in a separate form. He has introduced the above extract merely to account for the influence which this object of his contemplation had in regulating many of his actions. And having said this much, he shall proceed with that passage of the Doctor’s Journal which he opened to the Veteran, to elucidate further the sequel of the story which had so powerfully roused his curiosity.

After detailing a few incidents of the voyage, he proceeds.—

“ I had scarcely landed in the Peninsula, ere my first essay in the service was made in the face of the enemy. I had selected the 42d regiment, because it was that of which my friend Cameron was then the Major ; and, as I had never before seen a battle, the gratification

which I experienced on the preceding evening, when I received orders to be on the ground early the next morning, was to me new and indescribable.

“ We were on the ground at day-break, and had taken up a position on the brow of a hill, with a detachment of artillery on our flank. The opposite hill, on which the French army was posted, was obscured by a mist, which, like an undulating sea, filled the intervening valley, and rose sufficiently high upon the hills to hide completely the opposing armies from one another. The French bands of music, however, were slightly audible as the morning breeze swept from the declivity on which the enemy was drawn up. All was silence on our side, except that, now and then, was heard the tuck of a drum, and the words ‘ to advance slowly down the hill,’ as they were passed along the line ; varied only by the sound of the limbering and unlimbering of the cannon in our vicinity. At length the sun rose, and the mist gradually began to clear, ascending in spirals on the sides of the hills, and displaying to each army the gallant array and bearing of its opponent. It was, indeed, an inspiring sight.

“ Through the centre of the valley, which was about a quarter of a mile in breadth, consisting of very unequal ground, a small river

wound its course, to the banks of which the French army was advancing, in echelon movement, with colours flying and music playing, as if it were the day of a review rather than the morning of an actual battle. A few shots were fired at intervals, along the enemy's line ; 'till our guns, having attained an advantageous position, began to play upon their flank, making gaps in their front ; which, however, were instantly filled up, without in any degree impeding their advancement. Our battalion was directed to take possession of a small eminence on the right, which the French cavalry were evidently desirous of gaining. We made a rapid movement under the fire of our own guns ; but, before we could gain our object, a party of French cuirassiers was perceived wheeling round the base of the hill, as if determined to throw us into confusion. We were immediately ordered to halt and form.

“ It was in the short pause which ensued, as we waited the expected charge, that my attention was first directed to the impress of thought which passing circumstances stamps upon the countenance. The officers near me were brave and excellent men ; their minds were wound up to the performance of their duty, and there was a steady composure in the look of each, which indicated this determination : but, at the same

time, I could clearly perceive amid the fixedness of that look, the working of imagination: a train of associated reminiscences was rapidly passing through the minds of these daring men, that were rendered only more vivid by the uncertainty of the events which the moment involved. Not a word was spoken, except, in a subdued tone, the occasional expressions—‘steady men, steady!’ as a cannon-ball, plunging amongst us, hewed down a file or two in opening its path through our ranks.

“The look of each officer, at this moment, visibly expressed what was passing in the mind:—the parental fire-side—the last firm grasp of a father’s hand—the parting embrace of a fond, forboding mother—or that of a still more beloved object, with similar thoughts, were swelling in the breasts, and impressing the looks, even of those whose steadfast eye and collected bearing betokened nothing to the ordinary observer but the daring port of the gallant soldier. None of these feelings occupied my own mind; the only remaining scion of an ancient stock, I had left no parents nor family circle:—gone was the only tender attachment that ever clung round my heart. I had also acquired habits of abstraction, which enabled me to command my

attention under any circumstances; and, at this moment, I was turning over in my mind the inexplicable operation of the causes on which the train of our ideas depends; the rapidity of the vast current of thoughts which pass through our minds in the shortest space of time, and the difference between association and intentional memory, when my reverie was broken by the body of the orderly sergeant being brought into the rear, and hearing the command, given in a firm and audible voice—‘front ranks kneel—rear, make ready—present—fire.’

“ The effect was awful; the charging horse, at which the platoon was levelled, halted but shortly, only to wheel round, as if to disengage themselves from the bodies of the wounded horses and dying horsemen, which the fire had brought down; and, before our men could recover their arms, they dashed amongst our ranks, and all was confusion.

“ It would be vain to attempt the description of the battle, which was now general; the roar of the cannon, the smoke, the shouts, the clanging of trumpets, the groans of the wounded and the dying, may be conceived, but no accurate idea of a battle can be formed by the most lively fancy. Those most actively engaged are

often the most ignorant of the fortunes of the field ; and victory may be decisive in one part, whilst yet the day is lost.

“ Our poor soldiers defended themselves bravely against the horsemen, who attempted to ride them down on all sides : Highlandmen, however, display their courage most on such occasions ; their over-eagerness, which unfortunately afforded the opening in their ranks through which the cavalry entered, served them in the individual combats which ensued. The slaughter was great on both sides, and the struggle still hung doubtful, when a detachment of the English Horse Guards rode up, and gallantly decided the event. The remnant of the French horse, for the greater part of the attacking party were left dead on the field, retreated in disorder ; and left us to take up our position on the eminence which had been thus contested, and which we maintained during the remainder of the fray.

“ The first breathing moment discovered, among others, that my friend Cameron was missing. I enquired eagerly for him : the ensign of the Company near which I stood, the son of a tenant of my excellent friend, who had come into the regiment as a cadet, under his patronage, informed me that he had seen

him thrown from his horse, on the onset of the cavalry, in the effort to retrieve the error which had opened the way of the horsemen into our ranks ; and that he could not have survived, as the whole rode over him.

“ Poor Cameron ! he had anticipated his fate ; and, on the preceding evening, had delivered a paper to me, containing his wishes respecting the disposition of his property, and the communication of his death, should he fall, to his mother. He was by nature as brave as a lion ; and, with the best heart, as gay, thoughtless, wild, and extravagant as could well be ; but his brother officers remarked that he had lately lost much of the elasticity of his spirits ; that his wit and hilarity seemed to flow less naturally ; that he read more and talked less than formerly ; that a greater portion of his time was occupied in examining into the comforts of the soldiers, and in visiting the hospital ; and, although he was still the life of the mess, when we were in quarters, yet, that he often looked serious when the chaplain rapped out an oath. With all his apparent thoughtlessness, he had studied arms as a profession ; and was, indeed, beloved by every man in the corps. My intimacy with him was that of a brother. The occasion that first brought us

together, indeed, was sufficient to have united us in the closest intimacy ; and we were both genuine Highlandmen.

“ On receiving his instructions, I ventured to rally him on his presentiments.

“ ‘ I cannot help the depression which has lately seized me,’ said he ;’ I have combated with it, my dear Mac Alpine, in vain ; it returns in defiance of all my efforts ; and my old hypochondriac uncle, the banker, who imagined that he was a teapot, and used to stand with one arm extended like a spout, and the other curved like a handle, had not a firmer conviction that he was the useful utensil he supposed himself to be, than I have that some cloud is impending over me. I do not anticipate more risk than usual in the severe brush with the enemy, which we shall certainly have to-morrow ; but you know, my dear fellow, every ball has its commission.’

“ I ventured to inquire whether his letters from home, of late, were as satisfactory as his ardent disposition expected ?

“ ‘ Perfectly so,’ was his reply. ‘ My poor mother !’ Something like a tear started in his eye ; and the firm compression of his lips displayed the feeling conflict which was passing in his mind. Recovering his self-possession,

—‘tomorrow before dawn,’—he exclaimed; and, with a warm compression of the hand, we parted.

“The morrow came; and the last words which my excellent friend uttered were these, as he rode along the rear of the regiment—

“‘Highlandmen, be firm; do your duty; maintain the character of the regiment!’

“I turned as he spoke, our eyes met: he gave me a look which I can never forget; and the powerful influence of which induced me to write my *Essay on Looks*.

“After the events of the day were closed, I walked out upon the field of battle with the young ensign, whom I have already mentioned, to endeavour to recover the body of our excellent friend. The horrors of such a scene cannot be conceived by those who have not witnessed them.

“The night was serene; the full orb of the harvest-moon, suspended in the deep concave of an unclouded sky, seemed, in the calm dignity of its lustre, to read a moral lesson to mortals. Amidst the turbulence of a battle, the mind is too much excited to permit any reflections upon passing events; but, in the pause which follows, to those not engaged in the pursuit of the retreating army, the serenity of

Nature, after such a conflict, produces a deep sense of the utter insignificance of the affairs of mortals, the turmoils of ambition, and the rise or fall of empires, in the great scheme of the universe. We had felt the stirring passions awakened by the share which we had taken in securing this triumph of British prowess; but they were partly softened by the melancholy object of our walk, and almost wholly subdued by the peaceful loveliness of the night: but other feelings, those of disgust of our species, were aroused the moment we began to traverse the late foughten field.

“Above us, all was serenity, the still magnificence of Nature; around us lay the dying and the dead, relics of the fury of infatuated mortals; the horrors of the carnage, rendered more horrific by the acts of those, the followers of the camp, who were now busily engaged in stripping and plundering the bodies of the slain. These wretches (how can it be believed by those who have never witnessed such a scene?) were chiefly women! Well might the poets say, in the fable of Prometheus, ‘that, in adding to the original clay, in his formation of man, some ingredient taken

from every animal, he applied the vehemence of the enraged lion to the human breast*.'

" 'There is one effect of moonlight, which every accurate observer must have remarked : when the beams are reflected from the ripple of a shallow stream, the objects betwixt the flickering light and the spectator, being entirely in shadow, if they be moving objects, assume a peculiar, almost unearthly character. On the present occasion, the persons thus situated were numerous ; busied in their horrid occupation, they seemed like a troop of demons, in perfect accordance with the work in which they were engaged. The ground was strewn with helmets, caps, swords, and muskets ; dismounted cannon and their broken carriages ; the carcases of horses ; and the mutilated bodies of dying men, mingled with the still more mutilated dead. The spots where the contests had been most severe, were marked by the heaps of the slain. Our attention was particularly attracted to a small village, which the stream half encircled, giving the ground on which it stood almost an insular character ;

* —————et insani leonis

Vien stomacho appossiusse nestro.

HORACE, *Carmen* xvi.

it had been repeatedly and most resolutely attacked by the French, and nobly defended by the British Foot Guards. The cottages were unroofed and nearly battered to the ground; each was the temporary cemetery of the brave; whilst the bodies of the enemy, who in the last attack had been pursued across the stream, which was here much widened, so blocked up the current, that it had overflowed its boundaries, and formed a little lake in a recently reaped field on the opposite bank, in which the shocks of corn were still standing. The ammunition waggon passing over the field to pick up the wounded and convey them to the hospitals; the glare of the torches of the pioneers, digging pits for depositing the bodies of their fallen comrades; and the dreadful occupation of the harpies, who were previously stripping and plundering them, impressed me with the necessity of discovering, as quickly as possible, the remains of my poor friend. There was no difficulty in finding the spot where we had sustained the charge of the cuirassiers. Our brave fellows lay mingled with the horses and horsemen with whom they had come into close contact: some still grasped the bridles of their opponents, which they held when both had fallen together:

whilst others, by the nature of their wounds, displayed, too palpably, the obstinate courage with which the combat had been sustained.

“ I turned my eye upon my young friend, who stood beside me with his chin resting on his thumb and forefinger, in deep thoughtfulness, affording another strong illustration of my ‘ theory of looks.’ He had just begun his career in arms :—might not the soaring ambition which had hitherto fired his soul for distinction, thus soon terminate ?—is it worth the life which is risked ?

“ I fancied I could read these questions passing through his mind, as he gazed for a moment in my face ; a thousand cogitations were crowded in that single glance :—

“ Hope and fear, alternate, swayed his breast,
Like light and shade upon a waving field,
Coursing each other, when the flying clouds
Now hide, and now reveal the sun*.”

But Imagination, in the morning of life, cheats our intellectual and reasoning faculty. Before my young friend’s eye lay a ghastly heap of mangled bodies—on his ear fell the groans of dying men—his reason, at the instant, strongly condemned war and all its attendant evils ; and

* Home.

he silently wondered that man can thus criminally imbue his hands in the blood of his fellow men ; but no sooner did his mind accord to these truths, than fancy reversed the picture—painted, in the brightest hues, the image of his country—plead the sacred duty of her sons to uphold the honour of her throne—sounded in his ears the applause of the senates on heroic deeds—pointed to the approving smile of beauty, which hails the return of the successful warrior. Fancy was proceeding to heighten the colouring of the sketch, when I recalled my young friend's thoughts, by laying my hand upon his shoulder.

“ ‘ It is a trying scene, Campbell,’ said I, ‘ for so young a soldier !’

“ ‘ It may be so, Captain Mac Alpine,’ replied he, erecting himself and folding his arms upon his breast, ‘ but it has no effect upon me : the soldier, if he fall, meets only the fate of thousands, and his anxieties are ended : if he survive, the gratitude of his country is a sufficient recompense for all his hardships.’

“ ‘ Come,’ said I, ‘ we must not argue the point ; our search for our friend's body should not end here ; we must endeavour to secure it from the talons of these harpies :’

and, linking my arm in that of Campbell, we again traversed the ground, closely examining the features of every corpse that displayed the uniform of a field-officer ; but all in vain.

“ Numerous were the acts of brutality which we were forced to witness in the performance of this melancholy duty. Many well-known faces were recognized, but the body of our friend was not found.

“ What a fund of reflection did these slaughtered heaps present—how many ambitious projects—how many benevolent intentions—what warm affections—what deep regrets and fond imaginings—what vices and doubts—how much goodness, and how many ardent hopes, were suddenly extinguished ! I had seen death in all its forms ; but never before had I beheld the barbarities by which the avarice of mankind augments the horrors of a field of battle. Yet what should we expect ?—what is war ?—strip it of its glittering arms, caparisoned steeds, emblazoned banners, its music, imposing array, and all its pomp and pageantry—what is it ?—murder in the aggregate !—What is the field of battle but a slaughter-house ? In hazarding this opinion, however, which the scene around me so forcibly impressed, I must not confound

the soldier with his occupation—a contempt and indifference for personal danger ; an open, frank, and generous bearing ; a nice sense of honour, candour, gentlemanly politeness, and attention to others ; devotion to the fair sex ; warmth of friendship, loyalty, patriotism, philanthropy ; and, if to these attributes be added a liberal education and a deep feeling of religion, where can we find a more perfect combination of all that should constitute a man ? Such were most of my brother-officers—such, in all respects, was the individual whose loss I had now to deplore, and the search after whose mortal remains had elicited the feelings and sentiments which I have recorded.

“ How inscrutable are the ways of Providence ! The affair of to-day had, to all appearance, laid in the dust my lamented friend Cameron : one of the warmest of friends, the best of brothers, the most affectionate of sons, and the most unexceptionable in character as an officer and a man ; whilst one of the greatest libertines in the army, Captain Atkinson—for he had risen to a troop—was not only spared, but was elevated to a majority, and received the public thanks of the Commander-in-chief. It is, however, but justice to acknowledge, that he

was an excellent officer: he had studied his profession as a science; and, both in tactics and gallantry, was not surpassed by any one in the army.

“ We failed, as I have already related, in finding the body of poor Cameron; of whose death, however, I entertained no doubt.

“ In returning through a field of newly-reaped corn, in which the shocks had been thrown down and were scattered in every direction, our attention was attracted by groans, proceeding, as it were, from beneath some shocks that lay tumbled together: on removing them, we discovered a corporal of my own regiment, severely wounded; my excellent and honest, humble friend and faithful servant, Dugald Macnab.

“ ‘ Hah, Doctor!’ said the poor fellow, as we uncovered him, ‘ I axes your pardon for being so free; but you see, Sir, as how she thought it was all over with her, should it be some of the Frenchmen who might be moving the stacks; and when she see’d it was you, her heart sprung to her mouth, and the words came o’ themsels.’

“ ‘ Never mind, my good fellow; this is not a time for ceremony. Where are you wounded?’

“ ‘ Faith, it is nae so easy to say. I think I

got a scratch on the souther frae ane of the French dragoons, just before the pistol was fired that winged me,' replied he, striving in vain to raise himself upon his elbow.

" ' You are a non-commissioned officer of the Forty-second ; do you know any thing of Major Cameron ? ' I eagerly enquired.

" ' I fear, Sir,' said he, ' he's come to nae gude : I saw him fa' wi' his horse, in the charge when we were a' ridden down. Is he missing, Sir ? — God bless him ! — he was a brave soger and a good man.'

" Seeing that the wounded corporal could give me no information on the subject I had most at heart, I requested Campbell to get some men to convey the poor fellow to the hospital, and I should remain near him until they arrived. This was done : he was taken to the hospital, and recovered. I kept my eyes upon this excellent man until after the affair of Badajoz, in which he was again wounded in a manner to render him unfit for further service ; and he became my domestic.

" The hospitals were in a melancholy condition ; situated on a low, flat, moist piece of ground, occasionally overflowed by the river, and almost nightly enveloped in fogs. The natives themselves, indeed, were of a sickly

cast of countenance, and universally afflicted with remittents and agues ; it was not remarkable, therefore, that many of our poor fellows, who had escaped the grasp of death in the field of battle, sunk the victims of disease in the hospitals. Even officers in their quarters were severely attacked with fevers ; and the mortality spread so wide on every hand, that a feeling of hopelessness and depression fell upon us all, and rendered our meetings, at mess and elsewhere, scenes of the most gloomy melancholy. Many of the medical officers were suffering under the prevailing epidemic ; so that those who had withstood its influence were overwhelmed with their duties.

“ I was requested to see a lady at the quarters of a cavalry officer. My surprise may be conceived, when I mention that this was a Spanish lady, under the protection of Captain Atkinson. Before me stood the man, whom of all others I most detested ; with the history of whose cruelty and dishonourable conduct I was intimately acquainted. I had never before met with him, although I knew he was in the same division of the army ; and I had not told to Cameron the share which he had in the fate of Mrs. Atkinson, fearing that a duel might place my friend's life in jeopardy. He was a tall,

handsome man, in every point a soldier ; with a mild, pleasing expression of countenance, which ill corresponded with what I knew of the infamy of his conduct, and the badness of his heart : his countenance was at complete variance with my doctrine of looks, and made me secretly acknowledge the truth, that, although we may guess at a tree by its fruit, yet, that we cannot look into the hearts of men. All their study is to please, all their labour to satisfy their passions, and their endeavours to gain their own ends.

“ ‘ I fear,’ said he, bowing, as I entered the little room in which the patient lay, ‘ that it is too late, Doctor, to save this unfortunate woman ; she has been ill four days, the disease is gaining ground, and the delirium is of the most frightful description. You will perceive that she is a Spanish woman ; her attachment to me has induced her to forsake her friends, and, therefore, I am bound to protect her.’

“ What a remark from the lips of such a man ! I could scarcely refrain from taxing him with the desertion of one who also had forsaken her friends for him ; whose affection was of the purest and most disinterested kind ; who had received, in return, only neglect and

scorn ; and who was the victim of his cruelty and indifference. I looked at him for a moment ; and, without replying to his remark, sat down by the bed-side of the patient.

“ She was a woman, apparently scarcely twenty years of age, with the dark hair and pale complexion of her country-women, with a fine intelligent contour of countenance. The continuance of the disease had sufficed to produce emaciation ; but the suffusion of the eyes, the rolling of the head on the pillow, the low muttering delirium, with the action of the arms of the insensible patient, as if endeavouring to drive away some imaginary objects, and the occasional picking of the bed clothes, satisfied me that no favourable prognosis could be hazarded. As I held my fingers upon the pulse, I could collect from the train of ideas that were passing through the brain, that the poor sufferer believed herself again at home, and was pleading with her mother the excuse of her errors.

“ ‘ He is so handsome—he spoke so tenderly—yes ! yes ! yes ! loved me, mother—yes ! so devotedly.’—She repeated the last sentence a dozen times, till her voice dropped, and the words were confused in a whisper ; then, again raising her voice, staring wildly, and

jumping up in the bed, she exclaimed—‘ Yes, yes! but see’—stretching out her arms—‘ he is gone!—come to me, mother!—I’ll tell you!’ and then again she continued muttering in a whisper, until she became exhausted and fell back in the bed.

“ Atkinson, who seemed much affected, bit his lips, as she uttered these sentences, and stood gazing upon her.

“ ‘ Can nothing be done, Doctor?’ said he, with eagerness.

“ I told him that I feared not: but wrote a prescription, having given my direction to a soldier’s wife, who acted as a sick nurse, and was about to depart, when he seized my hands, thanked me hastily, and beseeched me to repeat my visit in the evening. Although I could not but pity the wretched man, at this moment, yet I felt a cold shudder pass through my frame as he held my hand. My evening visit was unnecessary: I was informed, by a note from Atkinson, that, two hours after I left his quarters, my patient breathed her last.

“ What a picture did the scene which I had just witnessed present of the just dispensations of the Almighty, and of the truth, that real happiness can only exist when the mind is influenced by sentiments totally independent of

external circumstances, namely, a consciousness of rectitude, and a firm reliance on the benevolence of the Creator. Here was an individual, on whose deeds as an officer the full tribute of applause had been lavished—the envy of his brethren in arms—who regarded his triumph as complete, and his expectations the most lofty, humbled in the midst of his glorious career ; his private feelings awakened to a retrospect of crimes held up to his mind's eye by an irresistible power ; and the still, small voice of conscience whispering in his ears, ‘ What are the honours which have been heaped upon you ?—what all the homage and command that you may win in the narrow scene of this diminutive world, to one moment's enjoyment of the peaceful repose of heart which solaces the bosom of the good and just man, borne down by misfortunes, turning his eye with reverential submission to contemplate the mystery of Omnipotent benevolence ?’

“ I saw nothing more of Atkinson while I remained on the Peninsula ; but I heard that the death of this unfortunate woman had produced a considerable improvement in his habits. He rose rapidly in rank ; and, after I returned home, and had left the service, he was gazetted

as a lieutenant-colonel. The future history of his unfortunate wife is still involved in mystery.”

Having digressed thus far to give all the information requisite respecting the history of Miss Caroline Ashton, the Editor has now to request the reader to return to the close of the seventh Chapter, the point where the Doctor's Diary was interrupted.

CHAPTER XI.

“ ————— she says nothing : what of that ?
 Her eye discourses ; I will answer it.”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

I HAD settled the matter in my own mind, that Mr. Mordaunt was over head and ears in love with Miss Caroline Ashton ; and I lost two hours' sleep in reflecting upon the nature of that irresistible of all human passions, which subjugates even human reason to its power.

I think it was Plato who defined love to be “ a pure pleasure, derived from the perfection of mind, a sympathy of soul, free from all corporeal feelings.” But, were this true, the sex of the beloved object would be of no account ; and moral charms, independent of personal beauty, elegance of form, and gracefulness, would be sufficient to awaken the passion in every bosom ; and the idea of its ever occurring at first sight, would, in that case, be

entirely out of the question. Now, this I deny; for that the unalloyed sentiment, the purest and most romantic love, has arisen in two individuals the first moment they have beheld one another is undoubted: and many examples in proof of it, both from ancient and modern history, might be brought forward, were it requisite to discuss the point so fully. If this be true, how, it may be enquired, is this sudden romantic affection to be explained? I believe, in truth, it arises from the influence of that natural physiognomical science which we all possess, and daily, and hourly, and momentarily exercise. There is something in the look of every person that indicates his moral qualities; and if these be of a description highly valued by another, and, at the same time, beauty or elegance of person be added, there is no reason why that mutual sympathy, which attracts and binds the opposite sexes, should not be at once awakened. It is not a matter of the understanding, nor a cool decision of judgment, but a simple act of that occult, inexplicable, but powerful and generally operating principle, which, for want of a better term, is designated sympathy.

I was half awake, conning over such thoughts as these, when Dugald, who knew my early

habits, tapped at my room door, and proclaimed that it was six o'clock.

The morning was clear and serene; the bright blue of the sky was unstained by the smallest speck of cloud: and, as much rain had fallen during the night, the transparency of the air was so great, that, from my little window, which fronted the Trosachs, every thing, even the most distant objects, appeared as distinct as if they were within my grasp. Ben Venue seemed lowered to half its usual altitude; and I could distinguish the heath and the mountain-flowers that embossed the summits of the rocky pyramids in the opening of the glen.

I had gathered from Dugald that none of the party was yet astir, except the parson, as he termed Mr. Mordaunt, who, he informed me, had left the inn at five o'clock.

“She may be gane,” continued Dugald, “to shoot a brace o’ moor-fowl, or to snare a trout for the leddies: but, yet, she took nither gun nor fishing-rod. Weel, ’tis hard to sae what took her out so soon, as the air is raw and the dew thick upon the sod.”

I was not in a humour to listen to more of Dugald’s conjectures; and, therefore dismissing him, I hastily dressed, and following the ex-

ample of Mr. Mordaunt, I walked out and directed my steps to the Trosachs. My first impressions on entering that romantic defile were such as I cannot describe. The glowing description of Sir Walter Scott had prepared me to anticipate many of its beauties ; but the idea I had formed of the whole fell far short of the scene before me. I had visited most of the celebrated passes of Italy and Switzerland : many, in point of sublimity and awful magnificence, leave the Trosachs far behind ; but, except the Vallée d'Enfer, between Freybourg and Schaffhausen, none of them can compete with the variety of its fantastic features.

In tracing the road which leads to the lake, I found myself, at one time, elevated above most of the rocky fragments which compose the pass : the craggy face and wild crest of Binean rising on the right ; on the left, the base of Ben Venue groaning beneath its garniture of foliage, richly tinted with the autumnal hues ; and, before me, a slight glimpse of the loch. Again I was lost in the gloom of the shade thrown by the trees shooting from the rifts of the rocks on each side of the deep and narrow defile. At one turn of the road, the most profound silence reigned, interrupted only by the gurgle of the little runnels which, clear

as crystal, crossed the rocky path : even the dropping of a morsel of withered twig, fractured by a bird forcing its way through the brakes, or a fragment of sand pushed down by the tiny foot of the emmet, became audible : at another, the ear was suddenly struck with the rush of some mountain torrent, concealed from sight by the tangled screen of birch, hazel, and eglantine, which covered the face of the crags.

Emerging from one of these dells, I sat down upon a projecting point of rock, cushioned with velvety moss, to enjoy the warmth of the sun, which had now risen high enough to throw his beams into the many windings of the pass that opened to the east. I was soon attracted by the hum of a bee, which alighted upon a honeysuckle near me ; and was observing the artifices of the insect to procure the honey from the deep horn of the flower, when a stone rolling down from the crag above arrested my attention, and, looking upwards, I perceived Mr. Mordaunt descending its rugged face.

“ Hah ! Doctor,” said he, “ I fear I have interrupted your study. I had climbed to the top of this rocky knoll to pluck a wild rose, which attracted my eye as I was strolling down the pass.”

I was almost tempted to say that I could guess for whom it was intended : but I merely remarked that he had displayed the taste of the poet in his selection of the flower.

“ I know no object in nature,” said he, “ so beautiful as the opening bud of the wild rose, bathed in the morning dew, and peeping out beneath the mantle of its fresh green leaves.”

“ Except,” said I, “ the blushing, unconscious maiden, of whom assuredly it is the emblem.”

“ Hah ! Doctor,” replied he, “ I perceive that your gravity has not closed your bosom to the impression of beauty.”

“ If it had, Mr. Mordaunt, could it fail to be again opened after having seen Miss Caroline Ashton ?”

“ Certainly not, Doctor !” was his response : but, purposely changing the subject, he enquired what I was so earnestly contemplating when he perceived me from the top of the rock : and, having explained to him, he linked his arm in mine, and chatting upon the promising aspect of the weather for the day’s excursion, we reached the inn, just as Dugald was in the act of announcing breakfast to Mr. Sketchly, who was occupied in transferring to

his portfolio a beautiful group of trees close to the house.

The ladies, with the exception of Mrs. Standard, were already assembled and equipped for the projected expedition. A large beaver hat, similar to that which Reubens has painted in his celebrated picture of the *chapeau de paille*, with a black lace veil thrown over it and dropping carelessly upon the left shoulder ; a dark green pelisse fitted closely to her person, and the belt fastened with a gold buckle, added grace to the tall, elegant figure of Miss Standard. I could perceive that Caroline had bestowed much care in arranging, in the most pleasing negligence, her auburn ringlets, clustering beneath a black riding-hat, decorated with a drooping feather ; and a dark-blue pelisse, the belt fastened with a silver buckle, displayed to great advantage her airy figure. The enchanting smile with which she returned our salutations heightened every charm and lighted up almost an angelic expression in her beautiful countenance. The eye of her aunt, who now entered the room, hung upon the lovely girl with an enviable delight.

“ I have found,” said Mr. Mordaunt, holding the wild rose lightly between his fingers and gracefully advancing to Caroline Asbton, “ a

native of these sylvan regions that throws into the shade all the brightest beauties of the court ; see—the dewy tear still hangs upon her blushing cheek.”

He presented the flower, which she received with a smile and a graceful inclination of the head ; and blushed deeply while she playfully remarked, that “ she was not surprized at Mr. Mordaunt’s preference : art might imitate, but could never equal the unsophisticated beauties of nature ;” and, in the simple-heartedness of innocence, she placed the rose-bud in her bosom.

The eyes of the clergyman moistened with delight. Mrs. Standard threw a look upon him, as if to read his very soul. It was evident that an idea, which was a stranger to her mind, had intruded itself, and was now regulating the train of her thoughts. Miss Standard, also, who was chatting cheerfully with the Cantab, suddenly became silent and thoughtful : and Aunt Bridget gave the Advocate a significant wink. Mr. Oatlands was in high spirits ; and, not being able to resist the desire of teasing his friend, rose, and, advancing to Caroline Ashton, requested leave to examine the flower. “ It is, indeed,” said he, “ one of the most beautiful of its kind. Mordaunt, this

is no groundling ; I know the species well. Miss Caroline, this rose is never found but shooting from the clefts of the rocks, flinging over their rugged fronts its long, green, streaming shoots, studded with blossoms. I was not aware that my friend's southron limbs could have mastered the crag on which this bonnie bud was borne. Mordaunt, what was the height ?”

The Clergyman knew the humor of his friend too well to reply ; and turned round to shake the hand of the Colonel, who at that moment entered the room. The Advocate, in returning the gift to its fair owner, enquired if she recollected the first stanza of the fourth Canto of the *Lady of the Lake*. She replied that she had read and admired it, but did not then remember the passage. “ It is,” said Mr. Oatlands, “ one of the many beautiful passages of that exquisite poem which impress themselves indelibly upon the memory. I am a poor hand at recitation, but I will attempt it.” And, with a taste and feeling which astonished those of the party who had judged of him solely by his mirth, he recited the following lines :—

" The rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
 And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears ;
 The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
 And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears :
 O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
 I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
 Emblem of hope and love through future years."

A slight blush mantled on the cheek of Caroline Ashton as the Advocate concluded the stanza. Mr. Mordaunt threw a glance of reproof upon his friend ; who, smothering a roguish laugh, his usual custom when pleased with the effect of any practical jest, walked carelessly towards the breakfast table.

The party was now seated. The steaming vase gave out its curling clouds : eggs, cold moor-fowl, venison-ham, broiled trout, marmalade, currant-jelly, and all the other requisites of a Highland breakfast, to which every one seemed disposed to do justice, were rapidly disappearing. The veteran, whose attention had hitherto been otherwise engaged, now began to peruse the dress of his daughters. He proposed that plaids should be carried by his servant and Dugald for the women, as he termed the ladies : " By Gad !" continued he, " if we meet one of those mountain-showers we have so frequently encountered among the hills, that silk pelisse of yours, Biddy, will

make but a sorry fight. The large drops of a Highland shower have no respect for finery."

"Drops, Colonel!" said the Cantab: "did you ever see a drop in a Highland shower? It comes down in torrents, not in drops."

The Advocate proposed to borrow the plaids of the host and the landlady. "I will carry our host's myself for Miss Bridget," said he, "I'll warnt 'tis big enough for two."

Aunt Bridget, pursing up her lips to a smile, and throwing back her head to add to the grace of a formal courtesy, thanked the Advocate for his kindness to a forlorn old maid. "But, O! Mr. Oatlands," said she, "you are so fond of a joke."

"I am, indeed," replied he; "but this is no joke. Suppose, my dear lady! we meet one of these wholesale showers your brother talks of, would it not be very comfortable to be rolled up together in a cozy Highland impenetrable?" Miss Bridget attempted to get up a blush, the failure of which greatly amused her lively niece, who threw an arch smile at Mrs. Standard.

Breakfast being finished, and the plaids despatched by the Colonel's servant and Dugald to the side of the loch, the party prepared to move.

“ Shall we not have the pleasure of Mrs. Standard’s company ?” said I ; for I perceived no signs of equipment in that quarter. “ No,” she replied, “ I have no desire to be drowned upon land. I have seen enough of wild rocks and glens. My curiosity is more easily sated than that of the young people ;” directing her eye to Aunt Bridget, who felt the allusion and was framing a rejoinder ; when the Veteran, who perceived an approaching skirmish, with excellent generalship drew off the weaker party, remarking, “ Never mind, Biddy ! there is no age in taste, and we may class ourselves among the young as long as we can enjoy their amusements.”

“ I hope you have your thick shoes on, Carry, my dear,” said Mrs. Standard. The lively girl had already accepted Mr. Mordaunt’s arm ; and, nodding assent, left the room : Miss Bridget hooked hers in that of Mr. Oatlands, who, also, carried her camp-stool : Miss Standard took her father’s arm and mine ; whilst Mr. Sketchly, with his drawing apparatus, and the Cantab, with his botanical box, paired off in close conversation on the organ of design. In this order we proceeded down the Trosachs.

Much of the enchantment of this extraordinary pass had vanished : the deep, clear, broad

shadows produced by the sidelong beams of the rising orb of day; the sparkling of the dew-drops on the leafy garniture of the grotesque knolls, that constitute its remarkable features, had passed away with the freshness of the morning hour, which had yielded to the almost oppressive warmth of a brilliant noon-day sun, in an unclouded sky. A remarkable effect of this change struck me forcibly: instead of the powerful influence of even the smallest noises upon the ear, the conversation of the groups passing on before us, at no great distance, was scarcely audible; except, now and then, when the hearty laugh of the Advocate indicated that he was succeeding in extracting some amusement from the remarks of Aunt Bridget. There seemed, indeed, as if none but those in our immediate group of the party were in the pass. My companions were not less struck with this circumstance than I was, and Miss Standard requested me to explain it: but, before I could frame my reply, the Veteran had afforded the explanation in his own way.

“Why, don’t you perceive, my dear Letitia,” said he, gently withdrawing his daughter’s arm from his, and assuming a military position, at the same time extending his cane like a sword,

as if about to give the command to a battalion, —“ don’t you perceive that, in this narrow defile, with a hot sun over our heads, we are exactly like mice in an air-pump ?”

“ You are quite right, Colonel,” added I ; “ but is it not extraordinary that, although this effect, evidently depending upon the great refraction of the atmosphere, must have been often observed, yet it is not mentioned, at least I do not remember seeing it remarked upon, in any work on pneumatics ?”

“ I have often observed the same effect of heat,” said the Colonel, “ when on duty in America.”

Miss Standard here ventured to remark that, not only was the power of sound diminished in this state of the atmosphere, but that of vision also.

“ Yes, Madam,” replied I, delighted to perceive that she took an interest in this kind of conversation ; “ that is owing to the greater degree of refraction of dry air ; whereas, in a moist atmosphere, the rays of light proceed nearly in straight lines to the eye.”

“ I comprehend your explanation, Doctor,” said she, “ and presume that the very clear view of distant objects, which I have often observed in the course of our tour, is owing to the constant moist state of the atmosphere in these mountainous regions.”

The Veteran was pleased with the remarks of his daughter, and smiled. "By Gad!" added he, "it is often most extraordinary;—you must recollect, Letty, my dear, how much we were struck with this circumstance, in looking at Ben Nevis from the inn at Fort William; although the distance is full eight miles, yet, we saw the summit as distinctly as if within half a mile of it. The whole of the previous day, Doctor, had been one *stone* shower, as we used to say in Savannah: but the following morning was a glorious one; and the landlady of the inn assured us that we might be twenty years at Fort William, and not see the mountain as it appeared that morning."

In this manner the conversation continued until we arrived at the side of the lake. Poor Dugald had deposited his load of cloaks and umbrellas in the boat, in which Aunt Bridget was already seated, whilst the rest of the party waited to deliberate on the course which was to be pursued.

I confess that I was disappointed with this view of the lake. Although it is picturesque, yet the idea of its grandeur and its mountain walls, which the perusal of Sir Walter Scott's poem had pictured in my imagination, was not realized. The keen eye of the Barrister observed what was passing in my mind.

“ You are a child of the mist, Doctor,” said he ; “ yet I perceive that you have fallen into the mistake which is committed by the crowds of visitors from the south, who daily rush down to the 'Trosach, full of the Lady of the Lake and Fitz-James. Now let me be the guide to-day ; and let the boat, with Miss Bridget, who is already fatigued with her walk, row quietly round into the bay, and take us up where I shall point out.”

This proposition was instantly relished by all the party, except Aunt Bridget, who, finding that the Barrister did not enter the boat which began to move off from the shore, and not having heard the plan which had been proposed, began to be alarmed : raising her shrill voice, “ Oh ! Mr. Oatlands,” said she, “ is this your gallantry ? Can you desert a forlorn old maid who has trusted to your promises ?”

Roused by the sharp note which struck his ear, the Advocate suddenly turned round, “ By Heavens !” exclaimed he, “ I have forgotten to communicate our plan to the old lady ;” and, beckoning to the boatmen to push back, rushed half-leg deep into the water to meet the boat. “ Pardon me, my dear lady,” said he, gallantly pressing the long withered fingers which were held out to him to his lips ; and, having hastily stated his plan, stepped back upon the beach.

As the boat glided off, Miss Bridget waved her handkerchief, whilst the Barrister, to the great amusement of the party, drew his from his pocket, and, tying one part of it round his neck, and the other round the branch of a noble beech which overhung the bank, stood with his arms hanging down and his head inclined upon his shoulder as if he had suspended himself from the branch.

“ See,” said Caroline Ashton, who had indulged in the hearty laugh which the quaint humour of the Advocate had created, “ Aunt Bridget actually rises in the boat, as if uncertain whether her gallant Lothario be in jest or earnest.”

“ He has spoiled an excellent scene,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “ by his hasty resuscitation ;” for, at that moment having disengaged him, and advancing to the party, he seemed to enjoy the laugh as much as any of those in whom he had provoked it.

“ To prove,” replied Mr. Oatlands, “ that my resuscitation is complete, I will commence my office of guide.”

He conducted the party round the base of a little hill to the left of the spot where the visitors usually take boat ; from which point, to that where the river issues which joins the lake with Loch Achray, a succession of

the most wild, romantic, and varied landscapes present themselves. At one part, the lofty, grey masses of the naked rock stretch almost into the water, leaving scarcely room for a single person to pick a footing round their base, and form a striking contrast with others, from the fissures of which the oak, firmly rooted, throws his knotted branches and deep-green foliage over the narrow path. Such is the nature of the foregrounds:—the distances, viewed across various breadths of water, are composed of the broad and apparently inaccessible shoulder of Ben Venue, its tremendous cliffs, intervening hollows, and scattered wood mingled with the broken rocks and frowning precipices which indent its base.

“It is a fearful, but highly picturesque and interesting scene,” said Miss Standard, as the whole party collected upon a little plat of green-sward, formed by an opening of the rocks, “Ben Venue certainly presents here all its grandeur; but it is a gloomy magnificence.”

The party proceeded under the guidance of the Advocate; and it required some address to get the ladies through the underwood. At length the river burst upon them in all its wild and boisterous magnificence. The recess into which they descended is an awful wilderness of rocks, and woods, and rushing waters; the river,

the origin of which in the lake is here completely obscured, seems to burst out of the side of the mountain; and, boiling along its rugged channel, hollowed in some places in the primæval rock, and shadowed beneath outstretching oaks, almost as ancient as the granitic masses in the chasms of which they are rooted, is again suddenly lost amid the lofty and thickly wooded crags, through which it has evidently forced a passage, to lose itself in the peaceful and glassy sheet of Loch Achray. The suddenness with which they had been transported into this apparently inaccessible mountain-recess, where all was wrapt in twilight gloom and mystery, and not a sound, save the rush of the rapid torrent, broke upon the ear, produced the most striking expression on the intelligent countenances of Miss Standard and her cousin. The Advocate enjoyed the astonishment thus excited, not only in the ladies, but in the whole party, none of which had ever been here before.

“ I hope you are now convinced,” said he, addressing Caroline Ashton, with the beam of exultation glittering in his eye, “ that this northern land, rich in that most blessed of all manna, oatmeal, and that most sovereign of all balms, whiskey, equals, if it does not surpass, your much-lauded Switzerland in the picturesque.”

“ This is indeed,” replied she, “ a most extraordinary and romantic spot.”

“ You see,” said Mr. Mordaunt, whose look bespoke the pleasure he experienced in the astonishment of his lovely companion, “ that, under the quaint humour of my friend, is hidden a refined taste, and a perception of the sublime and beautiful which is associated only with the highest class of intellect.”

“ At your old tricks, Mordaunt!” said the Advocate. “ Flattery, Miss Caroline, is the besetting sin of my friend.”

“ I have perceived no indication of that vice, as yet, in Mr. Mordaunt,” replied Caroline.

“ Hem !” ejaculated Mr. Oatlands, straining his penetrating eye upon the Clergyman, who felt the full meaning of the interjection ; and was about to divert the conversation into another channel, when the attention of every one was suddenly arrested by the exclamation—

“ Oh, Heavens !” from Miss Standard, who, having advanced a short way into the gloom of the recess, was now hastily retreating. She was followed by a being scarcely human, not unlike the idiot described in the tale of Wandering Willie, who had suddenly appeared from amongst the rocks, and was following, in a kind of ambling trot, close at the heels of

the lady. As he came into the light, he halted, and gave the party, which he now first perceived, an opportunity of surveying him.

He was about the middle size, of a spare habit, dried up by long exposure to sun and wind; his features were sharp and angular; his scanty head of hair was of a reddish-sand colour, and the few long, thin tufts on a chin, which had never felt the influence of a razor, were of the same hue; his legs and arms were bare, owing to the scantiness of his clothing, which was of the fashion of the country, and nearly worn to rags; and the nails on both toes and fingers were lengthened to talons. He stood for a few seconds, grinning at the party, muttering incoherent sentences; which, from the extension of his skinny hand, seemed to imply a request; and glancing his piercing grey eyes over the party, but chiefly on the ladies, with an indescribable rapidity of movement.

Mr. Mordaunt and myself having advanced, the creature turned round in an instant, as if apprehensive of some danger, and disappeared behind the rocks whence he issued*. We followed

* About eight years since, the Editor met with a being closely resembling the description of his friend, on the road between Callander and the Trosachs. He ran by the side of the carriage for nearly a mile.

him to the point where he had disappeared, but no traces of him remained ; indeed, we could not see many yards before us on entering the chasm, for the crag through which the river had evidently forced a passage, was so thickly overhung with trees and shrubs, as to exclude the light ; and the hollow, booming sound of a cataract met the ear, and led us to imagine that it was precipitated into a subterraneous cavern before it mingled its waters with those of Loch Achray. Whoever the being was who had emerged from this den, it was evident that he was well acquainted with it, as he had effectually eluded our power of tracing his flight.

This little incident aroused many conjectures respecting this singular-looking being. The Cantab, who had returned from gathering lichen and woodroff among the damp rocks, contended he must be a satyr ; and he was anxious to commence an argument with the Advocate on the possibility of the existence of such beings.

“ If that be the case,” said Caroline Ashton, “ he must have mistaken you, dear Letty ! for a mountain nymph ; did he not approach you with such a grace as Mr. Peters would have called a natural soliciting ? ”

“ Caroline !—Caroline ! ” replied her cousin,

with a look of reproof, “ you must rein in your satirical humour.”

“ You are right, as you always are, my dear Letitia ; I will be as grave as a judge.”

The Advocate, however, who would not lose the opportunity of playing off a jest on this little alarm to the ladies, enquired who Mr. Peters was ?

“A pious rector, who made love to Letitia”—was the immediate reply of Caroline Ashton :—“ but I must not proceed—only tell me, Letitia,” said she, “ how your knight of the cavern introduced himself ?”

“ Carry, you are incorrigible,” said her cousin. But, nevertheless, she good-naturedly proceeded to satisfy her request. She stated, that, having advanced to look into the mouth of the chasm, she felt something drop, as it were, near her ; and, turning round, saw the creature’s horrible eyes glaring upon her ; when she instantly retreated.

“ And he pursued,” continued Caroline Ashton ?

“ In that he shewed his good taste,” said the Advocate ; “ and he, also, gave an undeniable proof that the genus to which my friend Percival opines he belongs, are people of refined sentiments. Pray, Miss Standard, had he hoofs ?”

Miss Ashton seemed to enjoy the question, and was apparently about to add some pleasant remark, when she suddenly became pale, and would have fallen, if Mr. Mordaunt had not sprang forwards and caught her in his arms.

“For heaven’s sake, Carry,” said the Veteran, “what is the matter?”

“Nothing, nothing, uncle!” replied she, as she revived; and, blushing deeply, at finding herself supported by Mr. Mordaunt, she gently disengaged herself, thanked him for his attention, and sat down on a projection of the rock. It was evident that such a state of feeling was not the result of any thing connected with the little adventure already related, which had excited only the playfulness of the lovely girl; and I could not avoid referring it to a circumstance which powerfully attracted my notice, and made me almost, for a moment, believe in the second sight of the Highlanders.

Just before Miss Ashton fainted, my attention was roused by a movement amongst the trees above the dell in which the party was standing; and, turning my eye in the direction of the sound, I perceived the figure of a man glide past, half hid by the foliage, but yet sufficiently exposed to induce me to think that it was a person familiar to my recollection, but

who, I believed, could not possibly be in this part of the country. I noticed the eye of Mr. Mordaunt turned in the same direction, and suddenly, also, that of Miss Ashton, who immediately fainted. There was something mysterious in all this, which I could not explain. The Clergyman stood by Caroline Ashton with an expression of uneasy thoughtfulness; and, as she recovered her composure, she gave a look at her cousin, which convinced me that the source of her uneasiness was connected with what she had seen, and which was known to both. It was probable that none of the rest of the party had observed the person pass among the trees; and, although I determined to communicate my suspicions to the Veteran, yet this was not the moment; and, therefore, I did not care to turn his conversation from the channel in which it flowed.

“Why, Carry!” continued he, “you look as if you had seen a ghost. Is this dell, Mr. Oatlands, the Coir nan Uisk, Ursk, or what is the name?—By Gad! I never shall be able to mouth your break-jaw, outlandish, Highland names.”

“Coir nan Urisken,” replied the Advocate.
 “No, Colonel, that is a pleasure to come.

'This, however, is a Coir, and, according to our friend Percival, the being that has alarmed the ladies is an Uriskin, or a satyr.'

"Or something very like one," said Miss Standard; "but I do not think that that is the cause of my cousin's fainting."

"No, no," said the Veteran, "Carry has too much courage to be afraid of such ragga-muffin satyrs—a mere half-naked Highlander."

"Yet," pertinaciously continued the Advocate, who wished to draw off the attention of the party until Miss Ashton should recover, whatever might have been the cause of her fainting, "suppose, Colonel, it was the ghost of a Highland Cearn? you recollect the passage of Shakspeare—

" ——— the merciless Macdonnel
(Worthy to be a rebel—for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him) from the Western isles
With *kerns* and *gallow-glasses* was supplied."

It was owing to such gentry making these wilds their retreats, that the loch derived its name: it is generally both pronounced and written Catrine, instead of Cateran, which is, in truth, a corruption of Cath-earn, signifying, in Gaelic, men of war, soldiers, or thieves: now,

this satyr-like being may be the ghost of a Cearnach."

"Fiddlestick!" said the Veteran, who did not perceive the jesting of the man of law; "a man, Sir, of flesh and blood, take my word for it."

The arrival of Mr. Sketchly, who had loitered behind, in ecstasy with the views which presented themselves at several points in his progress, terminated the argument about satyrs, by his assuring the Veteran that the boatmen would be able to give some account of the dubious being who had appeared and vanished so mysteriously. It was therefore resolved that the party should move on to a little cove, where the boat had been ordered to put in; and as it proceeded along the edge of the lake, Mr. Sketchly pointed out the infinite variety of changes in the landscape, which was produced by the foregrounds altering, even when the distance remained the same. Mr. Sketchly explained the distinction between combinations of objects which interest, when transferred to the canvass, and those which produce powerful impressions on the imagination.

"Thus," said he, "the mystical obscurity of the mountain recess, which we have just

quitted, with its labyrinths of rocks, rushing water, and shadowing trees, is not fitted for the canvass ; whilst those very circumstances, added to its solitude and twilight gloom, tend to awaken trains of romantic associations, bordering on the supernatural, which form the great charm of poetry.”

Every one felt pleased with these remarks ; but a feeling of depression had fallen over the whole party since the inexplicable fainting which had overcome Caroline Ashton, and which at once completely subdued all the liveliness of her spirits, and sunk the joyous buoyancy so peculiarly her nature.

On arriving at the cove, they found the stores, which had been liberally supplied, spread out on the mossy carpet by Dugald, under the superintendence of Aunt Bridget ; who, seated on her camp-stool, was waiting with anxiety the arrival of the party. In a short time, the moorfowl-pie, which the Advocate eulogized as the quintessence of all that is excellent in the gastronomic art, the cold tongue, the veal sandwiches, and various other etceteras, all nearly disappeared under the brisk attack, as the old Colonel remarked, of the main body ; and totally vanished under that

of the rear-guard, namely, Dugald and the boatmen.

As the ladies did not seem wholly recovered from their alarm, nor desirous of ascending Ben-Venue to-day, and, as I pronounced that it was necessary to rest some time after so hearty a repast, the Advocate, to rouse the spirits of Miss Ashton, by changing her train of ideas, proposed that the party should retire under the shady screen of the rock, and fill up the time of resting with a story.

This proposition being agreed to, the Advocate stretched himself at the feet of Aunt Bridget; Caroline Ashton, much to the disappointment of Mr. Mordaunt, placed her arm in that of the Veteran, whilst Miss Standard, also, seated herself near him. The group being formed, Mr. Mordaunt claimed his right to name the story-teller; and, justly considering that anything of a sombre or a melancholy character would be wholly out of place at this time, named Mr. Oatlands.

“For once,” said the Advocate, “my friend Mordaunt has made a foolish choice: I am a purely matter-of-fact person; and never could I boast of either imagination to invent anything, or memory sufficient to retain what I hear, so as

to relate it to others : but, if a simple relation of what I have seen can be regarded as a story, I am ready to perform my part of the compact into which we have entered."

All were satisfied with the Advocate's account of his capabilities, and quickly settled themselves to listen.

"Did you know, Colonel," said he, "the late Doctor —— ? If you did, I need not inform you that he was one of those persons who pique themselves on certain peculiarities, and often keep alive old customs which have been long banished by the mass of society."

"I had not the happiness of his acquaintance," replied the Veteran.

"I knew the Doctor well," continued the Advocate, "and although I respected him most highly, yet he was a very odd man ; one who did good things in a very strange way, and was as full of prejudice as he was of Greek. I happened to be on a visit in ——shire, and received an invitation to spend a day at ——, on the twelfth of May, the Old May Day of the good old times. I will give the party an account of that day ; but, like Mordaunt, and other great men, I must give a name to my story, which I shall therefore call "*Old May Day*."

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD MAY-DAY.

“ ——— there was mine host, one that hath taught me more wit than ever I learned before in my life ; and I paid nothing for it neither.”

Merry Wives of Windsor.

“ AGREEABLY to my invitation, I left my friend’s house, and reached my especial destination on the 12th of May (Old May-day), 1815. A kind of unsettled, expectant look, on the faces of the villagers, denoted the approach of just enough of festivity to disturb, without sufficient amusement to occupy them. They looked half asleep, and the more industrious portion had gone off to their usual occupations ; those who remained were chiefly the idle and dissolute. Nevertheless, in all rural galas, there must be something picturesque and engaging, as long as the people remain sober. The men, with their bright-blue coats, red waistcoats, long

shoe-ties, and knee-ties, and little round tied-up posies in their button-holes ; the girls and matrons with their white aprons, their garments of many colours, their vivid bonnet garnitures, which ladies, I believe, call trimmings, often selected with such an undue appreciation of their own charms ; the pale and sallow universally chusing green ; the bright, full-blown, blowsy lass always adding to her native radiance with red or yellow ;—and, then the children, ever in the way, busy about nothing, excited, without a cause ; and, alternately, the pride and shame, the pleasure and torment of those elderly personages who retain the mob-cap, and pinched-up black sort of rusty-looking silk bonnet, that seems as if it never had been new.”

“ I did not know, Mr. Catlands,” said Miss Bridget, “ that the ladies attracted so much of your notice.”

“ Forgive me, my dear Madam !” replied he ; “ I am sorry that my attentions to you have not fulfilled my object of convincing you of my devotion to the fair sex.”

Aunt Bridget attempted to blush, smiled graciously, and begged the Advocate to continue his narrative.

“ All these multifarious sort of people,”

continued he, “separated from their party on the green, as my post-chaise drew near: the men, after the custom of English rustic beaux, appropriated to themselves the accommodation of the rail, against which they leaned, crossing their blue-stockinged legs, and giving a sort of bob to the gentleman as he passed. The women suspended their chattering talk for the indulgence of that long stare, of which the very high, and the very low, alone, have the privilege. The little bodies crossed their hands in front, and ran, to their imminent peril, before the carriage, dropping their little troublesome curtseys to ‘the gentleman.’ Yet, I don’t know how it is, one likes these tributes to the patrician state, and feeling oneself of a little consequence does make one more amiable.

“I was too late: the Christian service, with which the Doctor chose to preface the revival of a heathen custom, was over, and the great Monarch of the Lexicon and the Grammar was leading forth the small portion of his flock that had chosen to attend. Among these were two of the younger branches of his relations, the one laughing and blooming like Hebe, or rather, with her long ringlets, like one of King Charles’s beauties; the other, with the high

impress of talent on her marked countenance, a face on which the feminine attractions were not depicted, but which never displayed one indication of selfishness, nor expression of meanness. An arm of each of these young and interesting women was tucked under the wing of the Doctor, his ample robes half forming a mantle to each of them, his only cherished natural ties. The venerable divine looked full of importance; his face swelling out with the anticipated business of the day, his mouth compressed, his eyes, like the sky, sometimes dubious between fair and foul weather; yet, unlike the atmosphere,—for, as he generally set in, in the morning, he usually continued: when he rose gloomily, he looked black all day; no sarcasm could be too venomous to satisfy his inward cravings to make others as uncomfortable as himself, no mode of domestic government too tyrannical, no well-rounded periods of abuse too violent, both for the absent and for those present. In short, when once his temper began to indicate a storm, he never faired.”

“Nay, nay, Oatlands,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “you are too severe; I knew the Doctor: take him altogether, he was a good-hearted old man; and, if the many impulses of benevolence, the many acts of kindness, the many

resolutions of forgiveness which he felt, and performed, and made, be weighed in the balance with his faults, trust me that, whilst there will be found much to pardon, there will also appear much to commend him to that Being whose very essence is mercy."

"Well, well," said the Advocate, "I know it will have due effect. I wish," continued he, "I could have passed over in reality, as readily as I am about to do in my narrative, the period which elapsed between my arrival at —— and the commencement of the festivities. It extended to a long, unsettled, yet ceremonious two hours.

"I was first paraded by the Doctor into his library, and introduced to the ancients there: then I was sily, as a little bit of fun, lead into his wiggery by a young lady, who shall be nameless. Here we beheld every gradation of peruke—mushroom-wig, undress, and dress wig, frontispiece and back-piece, and all except the wig *au naturel*, an audacious piece of presumptuous imitation, which was not, in the Doctor's younger days, so much as thought of. These treasures, some in high buckle, and fully charged with powder; some a little the worse for last night's combat, by which I mean no insinuations that the church had been mili-

tant, but merely that, in the earnest vociferations, and other verbal contests, in which the good Doctor was at times engaged, sundry clouds of white dust were wont to escape from the ambush of his huge curls, despite the influence of pomatum, and all the ingenious precautions of frizzing.

“ ‘ I do like a wig to look like a wig,’ said my fair companion ; ‘ I detest those performances which I sometimes see on the heads of elderly ladies—a row of bright auburn ringlets on a wrinkled brow, or a gay, juvenile toupée upon a man of seventy.’

“ ‘ In short, you like a candid wig.’

“ ‘ Fancy me Dr. ——,’ cried she, placing on her head a ponderous concern which had just returned from preaching in St. Mary’s, Oxford, and enclosing her slender figure in one of the Doctor’s spare gowns. ‘ Mister Oatlands, I am proud to welcome you to ——, for though you are a lawyer, yet you are honest ; though you are a Presbyterian, yet you are not an apostate ; though you are a Scotchman, yet you are not—but, oh Heavens !’ screamed she, ‘ here is the Doctor himself.’

“ It was his voice, thundering along the passage—‘ Where is that wild boy, Oatlands, and that saucy jade, Miss ——?—bring them .

out, I say, bring them out, to shew themselves, and join the lasses on the green, and foot it nimbly—Doctor —— orders it:’

“ ‘ We are ready, Sir,’—said my fair companion, in an instant disentangling herself from her cumbrous vestments, and assuming, in a moment, the utmost precision and composure of manner: ‘ I was only giving Mr. Oatlands a lecture on whigism ; for I find him, I am sorry to say, an unconquerable Tory.’

“ ‘ Well ; come along, we will talk to him, and put him in the right way at dinner.’

“ ‘ Pray do, Doctor.’

“ ‘ Mr. Oatlands,’ said he, looking sternly at me, as he walked along, ‘ the man who is a Tory at ——, must be a monster of prejudice and obstinacy.’

“ When we had descended into the garden before the house, we found between twenty and thirty young ladies assembled, waiting for the Doctor to lead them off to the May-pole. These fair nymphs were as various in their deportment and attire as if they had met by hazard, and not by particular and well-weighed invitation. Some few were the daughters of country gentlemen : that class of persons who, in England, have more pride of station than any other order : they are, indeed, a ‘ peculiar

people,'—a distinct race—the very monarchs of country races and of provincial assemblies, concentrating within themselves the cherished prejudices of by-gone generations. Yet I mean not to disparage the worth of this class of the aristocracy, which, whilst it exceeds their brethren among the nobility in pride of birth, exceeds them also in firmness of principle, and in a strict attention, both by precept and example, to the conduct of those around them. Of course, in speaking of this class, I mean to refer chiefly to those who have not town-houses, but spend the whole year chiefly at their country seats.

“ The three young ladies who belonged decidedly to this *caste*, were sisters, and were strictly aristocratic in every thing but being rich; consequently they had ‘hung on hand,’ to use a vulgar expression, and were now on the debatable grounds of five, six, and seven-and-twenty. As their fear of degradation had prevented their marrying any one beneath themselves, so their plain faces had stood in the way of their being courted by any one above them. Maria, the eldest, was the only one of the family who could boast anything like a good complexion; but then, she had a very large nose. Nevertheless, good-natured and liberal

persons, especially those who had no daughters, said that she was handsome ; and asserted it the more stoutly, that none of the gentlemen could ever be found to agree with that opinion. At any rate, she was good-tempered, and had not that perpetual curl of the upper-lip which distinguished her next sister, Selina. Selina had red hair, puffed off by her mother's friends as ' golden : ' at any rate, it was the only golden possession that she had. She was accounted to be a fine figure, a kind mode of getting rid of any discussion upon her face. Her eyes were narrow, and close together ; her nose, from its sanguine hue and projection, was, relatively to her pale face, what a mountain covered with heath is to a sandy plain. I could never divine what she had to pride herself upon ; yet she entered a room with an air as full of confidence as if she had been the first belle there. Caroline, the youngest, was near-sighted, and had a trick of incessantly screwing up her eyes. Her hair and complexion were of that dingy, ashy hue which belongs to no class, which can neither be termed dark nor fair ; and she was a little awry : of course, as she belonged to a county family, she had her partizans, and was considered genteel. These young ladies were dressed scrupulously alike, even to their shoe-

ties; and I was puzzled, for half an hour, when their backs were turned, to know with which I was engaged to dance. You would have thought, by their extreme care neither to touch nor to speak to the majority of the other ladies, that they were performing quarantine themselves, either after some infectious disease, or that they were of opinion that the rest of the party ought to do so: but no, the only contagion they dreaded was, that worst of all complaints, vulgarity.

“ These three Miss Smithsons, along with a motley party, were all paraded up to the green which I had passed, whereupon stood a thing called a May-pole; but a device which I fancy the goddess Maia would not have owned, had she been alive, as a suitable tribute to her. It was stiff, gorgeous, and in execrable taste, and looked as if the old electioneering ribbons of some neighbouring contest had been appropriated to its decoration. I must here remark, that we were preceded to this spot by a flag and band of music, the Doctor calling upon every one to contribute a shilling to the performers, when we arrived at the May-pole. And now dancing commenced; and I, to my sorrow, was commanded to lead off with the eldest Miss Smithson; and, of course, expected

by the young lady to fall in love with her ; but, as I complied with the first injunction, I considered that I might be excused from fulfilling the last-mentioned expectation. In truth, we were not of the same calibre : she had some military acquaintance, and was versed in the affairs of the 73rd, from the resignation of the late colonel to the appointment of the youngest cornet. I knew nothing about any officer, but a sheriff's officer—‘don't look grave, Miss Caroline, it was not on my own account’—and I was far better acquainted with the details of the university calendar than those of the army-list ; but young ladies have a remarkable memory that way. I was soon released, and hastened to the dark-eyed, animated girl, to whom I have before alluded,—to whom I mean to *allude* only, Miss Bridget. I found her seated near the youngest Miss R——, in the most mischievous humour possible, and having a lively coadjutor in her young neighbour.

“ ‘ We have been contemplating,’ said my lovely incognita, ‘ every variety of country-dance-step, from the turned-up toe and hop of the country bumpkin, to that vague sort of waddling, kicking, ambulatory motion which gentlemen call dancing.’

“ ‘ Then, we have seen you thoroughly danced down by Miss Smithson,’ cried Miss R——.

“ ‘ Ladies, you are very diverting,’ said I, ‘ and —’

“ ‘ And we consider it your duty,’ said my incognita, ‘ to take the second and third Miss Smithson in turns ; every one does it ; and, if you begin with the set, you are expected to go through with it.’

“ ‘ I thank you for the advice, but I —’

“ ‘ Oh ! don’t be disturbed about an introduction ; we will manage that,’ said Miss R— ; ‘ and, if you are fond of family dances, there are the four Miss M——’s, whom you may ask at one stroke for the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth.’

“ ‘ Oh, Heavens ! I shall have a paralysis of the lower limbs before I have done, I expect.’

“ ‘ But there is no freedom of choice here,’ said my beautiful unknown ; ‘ and see,’ said she, ‘ what the Doctor is bringing to me !’

“ ‘ And to me,’ said Miss R——.

“ And, in short, I saw, to my infinite vexation, a spectacle, or rather a pair of ‘ spectacles,’ which annihilated my hopes of dancing with the partner for whom I secretly sighed—

(for sighs of this kind will occur, you well know, my dear Mordaunt)—for the whole evening.’

“ The Doctor, on these annual occasions, made the futile attempt to please his highly-born county acquaintances, and to conciliate the affections and contribute to the enjoyment of his parishioners ; consequently, he not only brought persons of different stations, manners, and ideas into close contact, but insisted upon effecting introductions, which could only be awkward to one party, and disagreeable to the other. The consequence may be readily conceived. The young farmer, bouncing down the dance, supporting, jumping, turning, and setting to a delicate, well-bred girl, thought her proud and stiff if she had that kind of *retenue* in her manner, which a nymph, if politely nurtured, cannot but display towards a man greatly her inferior in rank, and, not only in rank, but in all that marks and accompanies their difference of station.

“ ‘ How high and mighty she be ! ’ said a top-booted, corderoy-breeched young clodpole, after dancing down with, and kicking half-a-dozen times with his stout soles the tender ankles of a delicate and modest young lady, the daughter of a neighbouring clergy-

man. “ I’d raather have had Betty Sutton, by half.’

“ Betty Sutton was a red-faced, flaxen-haired, able-bodied dancer, who acquired a sort of notoriety by being what Dr. — chose to style the Queen of May. She was jigging it, miserably out of time, and with cheeks of crimson—whilst a fatigued, thin, but elegant-looking young officer, in vain strove to follow her down the middle fast enough to get out of the way of her *in politesse*, or to stand the swing which she spontaneously and gratuitously gave him when they reached the bottom. At length, his fine hair shaken quite out of curl, and his face the picture of woe, he begged her to excuse him for a moment, slunk behind the crowd, and was no more heard of that day. A laugh, ten degrees louder than a titter, shook Miss Betsey and four or five of her acquaintances, at this desertion.

“ ‘ Where’s Tom Tims ?’—cried the Queen of May—‘ he’s better nor any on ’em lords, any day ; I be quite sick o’ hoigh loife, that I be !’

“ But, to return to my fair companions: I saw them in despair led off; one by a miller, the other by a grazier. Miss R——, accustomed to her grandfather’s oddities, *non cha-*

lante, and getting through it as a task; my young unknown, behaving with a matchless propriety, displaying no little airs, but treating her Patie of the Mill as her partner only, yet answering, with a good-humoured dignity, his observations on the last importations of American flour. Only once did I see her lips, around which a thousand playful expressions ever hovered, extend to an absolute smile, and that occurred when an agricultural friend of her partner, encountering him in the dance, turned round and said—

“ ‘ Were you at —— Fair last week ?’

“ ‘ Yes !’

“ ‘ How’s oats ?’

“ As for Miss R——, I asked her, when breathless she passed me, after she had capered away with her partner, like a lambkin by the side of an ox—‘ Well, Miss R——, have you had much discourse with your Knight of the Golden Fleece ?—Have you learned how much mutton is to be per stone, and if hides are likely to rise ?’

“ No,’ said she, ‘ my hero was not so conversable as Amelia’s.’

“ Amelia is a *nom de guerre*, Miss Bridget; you don’t know her, so you need not guess.”

“ ‘ He only said to me,’ continued she, ‘ well,

now we are at the top!—and, when we had danced down—well, now we are at the bottom!”

“ ‘Senseless wretch! You ought to have answered him — the mountains have danced like rams, and the little hills like young sheep.’

“ ‘Fie! Mr. Oatlands, I’ll tell my grand-papa of you!—but here he comes, all in a flurry.’

“ In good truth, the Doctor was marshalling his forces preparatory to driving us all to dinner: but what was my surprise to find that the gentlemen were all expected to dine at the Inn, and that the good cheer of the Rectory was reserved for the ladies only. ‘Well, this is a May-day *à la Diane*,’ thought I, as I stood in hopeless agony, seeing the ladies flock by me like a flight of sparrows. Yet I was not so unreasonable as to regret the loss of the *whole* groups; for *one* only I grieved: she passed me almost the last of the retreating fair ones, and a sort of malicious smile lighted up her dark eyes as she looked up at me, and ran nimbly by me without speaking.

“ ‘I will storm the castle,’ cried I, in a paroxysm of vexation.

“ ‘Take my advice,’ said a spruce little country attorney, who stood close by me;

‘ walk to the Rectory, and pretend that you know nothing about this arrangement. Sit down at the table with a face of innocence—possession is nine points of the law—.’

“ ‘ Thank you, my friend !’ replied I ; ‘ and if ever I cheat my neighbour, or want to cheat him, I’ll employ *you* as my lawyer.’ ”

“ Fortunately, I was not obliged to follow his dirty means of intruding myself unbidden. A message, conveyed by a red-headed clodhopper of a boy, the Doctor’s under-footman, summoned me to the Rectory ; but to what intercession, or to what peculiar merits of my own, I was indebted for this distinguished honour, I still remain ignorant.

“ I found a spacious apartment set out for dinner, and lined, not only with the worthies of old on its bookshelves, but with the beauties of modern times, who were already seated at the ample cold collation provided by the Doctor. I was the only gentleman in the room, and, consequently, had much the same sensations as a white mouse may be supposed to feel amongst black ones, or a Newfoundland dog in company with French poodles.”

“ Do not be shocked, Miss Bridget ; I do not mean to infer superiority.”

“ ‘ Doctor,’ said I, in a piteous tone, ‘ am I to be the only knight among these damsels of noted charms ?’

“ You shall have a mate, Sir,’ said he; and, waddling out of the room, he thrust in a sickly, undergrown youth with a lady’s scarf on his shoulders. ‘ This gentleman is an invalid,’ said the Doctor; ‘ he comes in here, ladies, on condition that you will treat him as one of yourselves:’ and he pushed the blushing youth down upon a seat, and there left him to recover the confusion of his entrance.

“ I soon found out for what purpose I had been rescued from the herd of those who had been sentenced to the precincts of a low, tobacco-scented, blue-plated dinner, at a public house—it was to carve a round of beef, of which savoury dish the Doctor eat no less than seven times, commencing each renewed attack with—

“ ‘ This beef is excellent!—I knew you could carve, Oatlands, else you were not from Brazen-Nose, my man.’

“ At length, after my right hand had nearly lost its cunning, I found that every one else had done, and that the Doctor had begun with his merciless toasts; so that I was constrained

to despatch my share of the entertainment with as much expedition as possible.

“ And now began a series of ceremonials, upon the performance of which Dr. —— prided himself greatly.—*Nota Bene*, saving to his own right and left hands, there were none but home-made wines down the table—black currant, muddy as the Styx; white currant, thin, colourless, and conducive to cholera; raisin, sticky with brown sugar; and grape, made from that vine which the fox jumped at and despised.”

“ I am puzzled,” quoth Aunt Bridget, “ to think what Mrs. —— could have been about to have allowed such potations to have been concocted. I should like to send her my grandmother’s receipt for black currant, made in the year of our Lord 1780; for cowslip, brewed when I was born—”

“ 1750 !” interrupted the Colonel.

“ This is a digression,” resumed Mr. Oatlands, with a solemn look around him. “ Nothing is so troublesome and unprofitable as the subject of dates; I like no figures but those of the young and lovely objects which now greet my eyes” (with a kind and generalizing look at old and young), “ except, save and except, Miss Bridget, that of a certain absentee, who

has been, and who shall be, nameless. But, to continue my narrative :—

“ The first of the Doctor’s amiable fooleries consisted in drinking solemnly to the health and welfare of the parents of all his young ladies, with a little commendatory tribute, merited or not, as it happened, to each. Now this would have been all very well, could the course of Nature have been stopped to oblige him, and all the parents of all the young ladies present lived to have their healths drunk, from May-day to May-day. But it would occur, in spite of Dr. —, that some young damsels had been orphans for years; others had witnessed the last slumbers of a father or mother, perhaps, since the last festive occasion which had called them together; and a few, perhaps, might have parental ties, which, from conduct, insanity, or other circumstances, they were not desirous to have recalled to public notice. Nevertheless, the Doctor went round, speechifying in set terms, varying his beautiful paragraphs with much ingenuity, but making a solemn pause at those of his fair guests whom death had deprived of their closest connections. The consequence was, that he set half a dozen young ladies a crying. One circumstance struck me particularly, and interested and

shocked me greatly. There was a delicate, pretty-looking girl, who seemed to belong to nobody there, and whom I had remarked as moving about the room alone, having no acquaintance. She was the daughter of a major in the army, a person of good family, and—but who—I hardly know how to express myself—*ought* to have married her mother.”

“A vastly proper remark!” was heard to fall from Miss Bridget’s lips, in a suppressed voice.

“I believe that Dr. —— was the first person who had invited this poor girl into what was esteemed respectable society, and I should not think she would forget the condescension in a minute. After eulogizing her father as ‘that brave officer’ (by-the-bye, I believe he was in the militia, and had served two days in the Birmingham riots), ‘a most accomplished gentleman, a man of unsullied *honour*, a credit to his family, his birth-place, his country:’—he paused significantly; looked most portentous; shook a good deal of powder out of his wig; and, in a tone more than usually audible, said—

“‘I forbear to speak of your mother.’

“My cheeks, for once, glowed with that painful feeling which is produced when others are needlessly pained. The gentle girl bowed

down her head like a broken flower: and I saw, to my mingled delight and concern, that the eyes of Amelia were filled with tears.

“ Do not too hastily condemn the old Doctor. I am persuaded that he meant most kindly by this young person; but he never could resist the temptation of producing an effect.—He was a great actor every where but at the dinner-table; and there, like Garrick on the stage, he was natural.

“ After our progenitors and progenitrices were discussed, the Doctor thought it necessary to introduce a new species of torture. A large gold cup, of most suspicious-looking, sacred appearance, filled with a compound, of which wine and spirits made the least ingredient, swimming with leaves of borage, and tasting of lemon-juice, stick-liquorice, and other vegetable ingredients: this huge concern, which was called the loving-cup, and which was applied to the lips of each individual without reserve, as the auctioneers say, accompanied by a toast from the Doctor to the health of the person ‘whom you love best.’ The change of feeling upon the introduction of this new ceremonial was remarkable. Young ladies who had snivelled or looked pensive when their dear papas

and mammas were referred to, now tittered abundantly; some could scarcely hold the cup for laughing; others attempted to pass it slyly. One pretty nymph declared that her lover must be in Fairy Land, for she hadn't one on earth; another, who was known to be engaged, said she wished her's was there. The elder Miss Smithson drank off the toast good-humouredly, and submitted to be joked by her neighbour about her military taste; but the younger ones passed it round, after sipping it with haughty and contemptuous looks; for which offence they were never invited to the Rectory again.

“ ‘ Am I to name the idol of my affections, Grandpapa ?’ said the lively Miss R——, as she took the huge goblet in her beautiful hands.

“ ‘ Thou saucy jade, thou pussy, thou minx, thou prate-a-pace!’ squeaked out the pleased old Doctor; fond, even as a parent of his first-born, of his two granddaughters—‘ even as thou wilt; for, like thy mother, and like her mother too, thou wilt have thine own way.’

“ ‘ Well, then, here's to the Grazier!’ cried the fair girl. ‘ Nay, sister, you can't be angry, for Grandpapa introduced him to me.’

“ ‘ If we chuse our last partners, we may all drink to the memory of some honest vocation,’ said Amelia, with hypocritical gravity.

“ ‘ I have no doubt but that the next harvest has your best wishes, Miss Amelia,’ said I.

“ ‘ It has ; and may the arts of industry flourish any where except at a dance,’ said she, in a lowered tone, as the cup passed her.

“ Nay, Miss Bridget,” continued the Advocate, good-humouredly, “ I will not gratify you ; I will not tell you of whom I thought when the loving-cup, after its evolutions, came round to me. All I know is, that if that fair object of my admiration were ignorant of the object of my thoughts at that moment, she must have studied the science of the loving-cup to very little purpose under the great Dr. ——.

“ We separated early, acknowledging all, I believe, the kindness of purpose of the worthy Doctor in assembling us on the Twelfth of May, but regretting his arrangements. Few, I believe, left —— without some relique of the day. The gentlemen at the ordinary went home tipsy ; some were found in the ditches ; others, who had not head enough to get so far, slept on the benches of the public-house. Such are the frequent consequences of a separation from the restraints of female society.

“ The young ladies were mostly indisposed in the evening. One had the tooth-ache ; another complained that her clothes were scented with the fumes of the Doctor’s pipe ; a third never drank British wines at home, and they did not agree with her. Most of them were vexed at being interrupted in their flirtations with some favoured beau. I myself had an abominable headache from drinking deeply the contents of the loving-cup, of which I thought myself in gallantry bound to imbibe largely ; and all the company, I believe, would, from the result of their own personal experience, have willingly subscribed for a new edition of the poem, of which Dr. — was so fond, entitled the ‘ Tears of Old May-day.’ ”

The Advocate’s story had the desired effect ; it dispersed the heavy cloud that hung over the party, which now moved to the boat : but, before entering it, Miss Standard requested Mr. Mordaunt, whose arm she had accepted, to ask the boatman if he could give an account of the singular being whose presence had so startled her in the dell.

“ Aye ; wha should she be,” replied the boat-

man, ‘wha but Sandy Mac Vitæ? Nae doubt, Sir, ye hae heard o’ Sandy?’”

“Not I, truly,” said Mr. Mordaunt.

“Weel, weel, it does nae matter:—he is ane of twins; his brither is dead a year ago. The nicht afore he was born, his mither was frightened by the taisch* o’ his father, wha was in Spain. Andrew Mac Vitæ, ye see, listed, and left his spouse ahint him:—what is your opinion, Sir, anent the army?”

Mr. Mordaunt was amused with the categorical mode of conversation so common with Highlanders, but he replied—“As to my opinion of the army, there is so much to be said, that we must defer the discussion until another time: but I may now say that, judging from the courage and the high military character of the highland regiments, the army is a line of life peculiarly adapted for a Highlander.”

“Ye ken little about the matter, Sir, if ye think so; Highlanders ne’er would list, were it no to oblige the laird. May be ye ken’d, Major Cameron?”

“I had not the honour of knowing that gal-

* Taisch implies the similitude of the person in the second sight.

lant officer," said Mr. Mordaunt; "but I am anxious that you should furnish me with some information respecting the wild man, Sandy Mac — what did you call him?"

"Mac Vitæ," replied Donald. "Weel, weel, I am coming to that. Ye see that the Major was Andrew's chief, and fell in the same fecht wi' him—aye, it was a sair day for the Camerons as weel as the Mac Vitæs!—but Andrew fell wi' the chief, and that was some consolation to him; though I true it was little to the gude-wife, wha, that very nicht, saw Andrew wi' a great gash in his head."

"I understood," said the Clergyman, "that he fell fighting in Spain?"

"Tweel did she," replied the everlasting digressor; "there's nae doubt that she fell on Spanish ground. But a stark man was Andrew, to my certie!—ere he fell, I opine, the French got as gude as they gied, or my name is no Donald Cameron."

"But what of Sandy Mac Vitæ?" said Mr. Mordaunt, anxious to bring him to the point.

"Sandy!—that's true, I was forgetting Sandy—nae doubt ye tak snuff, Sir!—I prefer rapée:—ye see this mull, Sir?—my great great grandfather, by the mither's side—she was a

Grant d'ye see, and came o' gentle bluid ; my great great grandfather gat it frae Grant o' Rothermurchies ; it was an heir loom."

" But what of Sandy Mac Vitæ ?" reiterated Mr. Mordaunt.

" Weel, weel, we're coming to that. When the gude wife saw this waeful sight, she gied nearly dimentit, and fell into labour."

Miss Standard, who until now had stood admiring the patience of Mr. Mordaunt, and the specimen of a true Highlander, which Donald exhibited, turned round and approached the boat.

" Wait a wee, my leddy !" said Donald, stepping into the water ; " ye'll wat ye're bonnie feet—saftly now, dinna be in a hurry—just stap on my knee !"—bending his knee, and gallantly suiting the action to the word, as Mr. Mordaunt handed her from the bank. " Now, there, sit down my leddy, 'tis a' right !" and Donald again regaled his nose with a pinch of rappée. " Weel, Sir, said he," returning to the charge with Mr. Mordaunt, " ye dinna snuff?—a weel, ye see that the tweens were born idiots ; the head o' ane o' them was as flat as a paddock's."

" Flat ! did you say ?"—exclaimed the Cantab, stepping out of the boat—" the forehead,

you mean, my good man:—there was no development of the intellectual faculties.”

“ What’s ye’re wull, Sir ?” said Donald.

“ Nay, Mr. Percival,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “ if you interrupt Donald, I shall never hear the end of his tale.”

“ Ye’re richt, Sir, quite richt, Sir ; nae man should be bauked in a story. I kend a man wha was telling some news whan anither came in—”

“ Nay, Donald, leave that story at present—what of the twins ?”

“ Weel, weel, we’re coming to them. Ye see Andrew Mac Vitae’s wife died, and the tweens grew up little better than daft. ’Tis a sair misfortune that, Sir ! do ye nae think sae ?”

“ It is, indeed ; and how were they supported ?”

“ ’Tweel ye may speer that ; but, as the minister says, ‘ the Lord is kind to bairns and daft folk :’ so a gentleman, wha heard o’ their condition—ye hae some kind folks in the Lowlands—and Providence fills the heart o’ man wi’ mercy every where, it fa’s like the dew o’ Heaven in the plains and on the mountains !”

“ Well,” said Mr. Mordaunt, fearful of another digression, “ what of this gentleman ?”

“ Ouh, naething, Sir, naething. You see he

gaed an order to Duncan Stewart—ye ken Duncan, our landlord?—a weel, Sir! ye see Duncan gat an order to cleid the tweens, and to get them taught to read: but it was o' nae use, Sir. Ye dinna think it possible to teach a fool to read?"

"Never mind what I think, Donald; proceed."

"Ye're richt, Sir, ye're thoughts will no mend the matter now:—but it is a fact, that the Dominie could mak naething o' them, puir things! they had nae stomach for learning, and just wandered about like wild nowte."

Mr. Mordaunt had heard enough of the narrative to guess the sequel; and politely thanked Donald for the information. But a Highlander is not to be put off in that way, and Donald made a determined stand against it.

"Na, na, Sir!" said he, refreshing his olfactories with another pinch, "ye hae nae heard the best o' the story. The tweens, ye see, Sir, grew up to callants, wilder and wilder. That was a consequence to be expected—is that not your opinion, Sir?—but, what was I saying?—aye, Duncan Stewart was obligated to cut the auld claise frae their backs, and hae the new put on by main force: few wise folk require

sic persuasion to put on a new coat ; do they, Sir ?”

“ Never mind ; proceed, Duncan.”

“ Weel, Sir, they were awfu’ speilers ; and ane day the youngest was found floating in Loch Achray. Nae doubt ye’re wondering at the word youngest, when they were tweens—but such a think is possible, is it no, Sir ?

“ Weel, Sir, ye dinna seem disposed to gie an opinion ; perhaps ye’re right—but, what was I saying ?—aye, the youngest gat, naebody kens how, into Loch Achray, although it is possible that he may hae fallen into the Teith, and been carried down—is that no likely, Sir ?”

The Colonel, whose patience had been for some time exhausted, now earnestly begged that Mr. Mordaunt would step into the boat : “ If you wait, my dear Sir, to hear the end of Donald’s story, the revuellée will be beaten to morrow morning.”

Donald pulled off his bonnet.—“ Ye’re ho-
hour’s time eneugh,” said he, “ for the Coir-
nan-Uriskin ; ye’ll no think muckle o’ it, when
ye get there.”

Mr. Oatlands smiled.

“ I have only one question more to ask Donald,” said Mr. Mordaunt.

“That will produce five hundred on his part”—exclaimed the Advocate.

“Tell me,” continued Mr. Mordaunt, “how this wretched man is supported?”

“Naebody kens; it may be, like the prophet, he is fed by the corbies. The herd lads, nae doubt gie him a scone now and then; and, when he happens to be on the road, travellers gie him a bawbee for snishing.”

“The poor creature disappeared so suddenly,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “that I fear he has shared the fate of his brother.”

“Do you think sae?” asked Donald.

“By Gad, Mr. Mordaunt!” exclaimed the Veteran, “we must leave you and Donald behind.—Donald, I command you to do your duty!”

“Weel, weel, Sir, ye army gentlemen maunie be gainsaid—your honour’s pleasure maun be done.”

Donald took another pinch; and, with the most provoking coolness and composure, stepped into the boat, and shoved it from the beach. The Cantab and the Advocate took the oars; the former to display his skill in rowing, the latter from his knowledge of the proverbial awkwardness of Highland boatmen. In two

minutes we shot into the little creek which leads to the Coir-nan-Uriskin.

As we pushed off in the boat, I again caught a glimpse of the same figure that had attracted my eye in the dell, bending forwards from behind the rock under the screen of which the party had been seated. I was now more than ever puzzled, as the recognition which the distance permitted me to make, almost convinced me that my first idea was correct ; but how to account for the presence here of that individual, was a mystery which I could not solve : and still more difficult was it to explain the impression which his appearance, admitting the truth of my conjecture, had made upon Caroline Ashton and Mr. Mordaunt. As I gazed, the figure disappeared, and I was again half inclined to think that it was one of those illusions of the brain that mock the eye ; yet, I determined to lose no opportunity of investigating the mystery.

If we had not seen the mountain recess, which we had just left, the Coir would have made a powerful impression upon us. It is as wild, and nearly as romantic as the dell we left, as far as concerns trees and rocks, and the rude piling of huge fragments, which form the

narrow cavity which the magic of Sir Walter Scott has transformed into a grotto :—

“ Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.”

But it wants the river-torrent and its interminate source and afflux under the gloom of the mingled shade of the oaks and birches, with the distant hollow and mysterious boom of the unseen waterfall, interrupting the solemn stillness of the spot, which impresses so high a feeling of the sublime in the other recess. There are, it must be admitted, in the Coir, when a person visits it alone, a solitude and a stillness which are truly fearful: if he suspend his footsteps to listen for some demonstration of life or humanity, he hears only the beatings of his own heart; he seems shut out of the world; and there is nothing to destroy this impression. But the Coir requires to be visited alone; it is to the imagination, not to the eye, that we must ascribe the sublime awe with which the mind is overpowered.

“ Well, Miss Caroline, are your ideas of the Coir, formed upon Sir Walter’s description, realized ?” said the Advocate.

“ I prefer,” replied she, “ the taste of Letitia’s living Urisk, if I dare believe that the sylvan

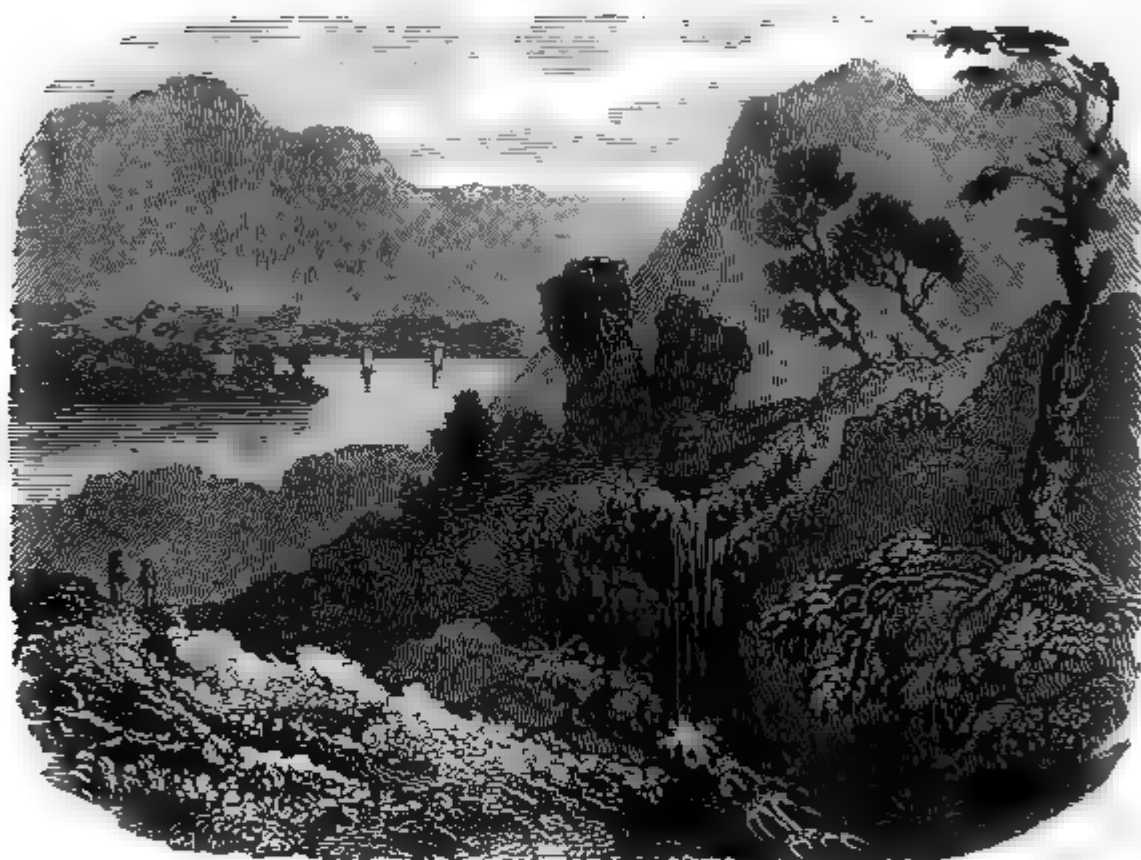
deity can retire to a more comfortable abode in severe weather."

The Advocate smiled. "You are certainly right in your judgment of the two spots; yet, for hundreds that visit the Coir, not one sees the mountain recess."

"It is a fortunate circumstance," remarked Mr. Mordaunt, "for the comfort of the Urisk."

THE END OF VOL. I.

THE
HIGHLAND INN.



COIR NAN UIRISKIN.

VOL. II.

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THE HIGHLAND INN,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

“ ——— What see you there,
That hath so cowarded and chased your blood
Out of appearance ?”

HENRY THE FIFTH.

As Donald had foretold, we were much disappointed in the Coir nan Uriskén ; indeed, there was nothing sufficiently attractive in its aspect, from the water, to induce us to leave the boat. Time, also, like a silent river, had flowed on so imperceptibly, that we were warned by the deepening shadows, which the downward sun was beginning to throw over the hollows on the face of Ben Venue, that it was time to think of returning to the Inn ; we, therefore, crossed to the opposite side of the lake, and landed in the little cove, into which Donald, with the gravity of a veritable chronicler, assured us the Lady of the Lake was wont to push her skiff.

The second mysterious appearance of the vision, for I could scarcely believe it any thing else, of the individual the least likely to be in this part of the world, awakened in my mind a train of unaccountable imaginings which I could not suppress. The effect, however, which the same optical delusion, or something else very closely resembling it, had apparently produced on Caroline Ashton and Mr. Mordaunt puzzled me: it was an enigma which I longed to solve, by questioning either of the parties respecting what they had observed. It had altered their countenances and changed their demeanour in a remarkable degree. The vivacity of Miss Ashton had completely vanished; she appeared thoughtful and alarmed; and, the moment that we landed, she clung to the arm of the Veteran, as if she sought his protection against some impending evil. Looks, also, which spoke important communications, were exchanged between Caroline and her cousin, who requested me to give Miss Ashton my arm, so that she was supported by the Veteran and myself, whilst Miss Standard hung on the other arm of her father. Mr. Mordaunt seemed purposely to have fallen into the rear, with the Cantab and Mr. Sketchly; although it was very evident that he was aware of the cause of Miss Ashton's

perturbation. Yet his gait, his silence, and his look, indicated that some serious reflections were passing in his mind, connected with the extraordinary incident which had so lately occurred. But great as my anxiety was to understand the meaning of these obvious impressions, caused by an apparent spectral illusion on at least three of the party, the present was not the moment for obtaining an elucidation of the mystery ; and, therefore, I suffered my thoughts to take an excursive range in framing a solution, which, afterwards, turned out to be wholly incorrect.

How curious it is, often, to contemplate the workings of imagination on subjects devoid of the foundation of experience, and which, indeed, seems altogether baseless. And yet, even when conscious of their nothingness, how deeply do we permit them to impress the mind. A temporary belief in preternatural agency may arise, and, like every thing else which circumstances have aided in strongly occupying attention, may affect the feelings, and awaken ideas which tinge the whole train of our reflections. I could not seriously assent to the doctrines of second-sight, although they had been familiar to me from my earliest infancy ; yet what I had witnessed almost made me a convert. But still

this question arose—were this appearance a mere delusion, why should others be, apparently, as much influenced by it as myself? I determined to have the mystery resolved the first opportunity which presented itself of speaking to the Veteran on the subject.

In consequence of the state of Miss Ashton's feelings, and those of Mr. Mordaunt, which were still more inexplicable, our walk up the Trosachs would have been a silent one, had not an incident occurred to disturb the train of thought in all of us. It was one of those occurrences which possess little of interest in themselves; but which are so strongly tinged with the ludicrous, that the mind, even in the most serious mode of its reflections, can scarcely avoid relaxing and feeling its influence.

Our band had just entered the Trosachs, when we encountered a party coming down, followed by a handsome barouche and a tilbury. It consisted of two gentlemen and four ladies. The younger portion of the bipeds, forming what the Veteran called the avant guard, was composed of two pert young misses, frightfully drawn in at the waist and fashionably overdressed, leaning upon the arm of a young man, the very pink of dandyism. I fancied that the faces of the

damselfs were familiar to me ; but they were too much engaged with their companion, who seemed to pay an equal tribute to the wit of both, to look up ; indeed, the loudness of their conversation, and the gusts of laughter in which they indulged, showed that they were in the best humour with themselves and with one another, and far too deeply engrossed in the subject of their mirth to notice either persons or the scenery around them. In vain the birches on the face of Binean displayed their silvery stems and azure leaves ; in vain the trailing eglantine threw its green and rosy veil over the face of the rocks ; the budding brake, the flowering broom, the fern, the wooded knolls, cushioned with manifold coloured mosses and purple heath, the loch, and the mountain, were alike unnoticed ; and equally unheard the trill of the rock linnet, and the mellow song of the mavis, who now poured forth his lengthened notes from the nested foliage.

The other division of the party, which we had time to reconnoitre, consisted of a 'squat, or rather dumpy, round-faced, consequential little man, dressed in a green frock coat, white trousers, and a hat with an unusual breadth of brim ; a lady of a similar calibre, richly attired, but without the smallest attempt at elegance,

who screened a broad, red, shrewish face from the sun with a white silk parasol; and a tall, slender, sharp-faced, sarcastic looking female, evidently, from the plainness of her dress, some dependent or humble friend: a footman, in a handsome livery, with a gold-headed cane, which would have been in place in Grosvenor Square, followed at a respectful distance.

As we approached the last group, my astonishment was excited in recognizing, in this trio, the father and mother of my brother officer and worthy friend Wetherell, and his maiden aunt, Miss Mary Stapleton, his mother's sister.

Miss Standard was remarking, in a whisper, on the stately strut of the little man and his companion, when he suddenly stopped, shook off his womenkind, and, advancing towards me, put out his hand, and exclaimed, "Dr. Mc Alpin, or I am much mistaken?" and, without waiting for a reply, continued, "how happy I am to see you; who would have thought of meeting you in this wild place?"

"I was about to make the same remark, Mr. Wetherell," said I, shaking the little man by the hand, and bowing to the ladies, who now came up; "I did not expect to meet you so far from the Exchange."

“ True, Doctor ! true—a fool’s errand—dragged here by my daughters to see an island and a cave—could have gone to the Isle of Wight for half the money—know nothing about the cave—I dare say the Thames tunnel is a better thing—but women will have their way. Did you not speak to the girls ? Hoa ! hoa ! Kitty.”

Kitty was beyond hearing ; and Mrs. Wetherell pronounced nothing to be so vulgar as bawling after people.

“ Well, well, my dear ! suppose it will soon be vulgar to eat or sleep. Snubbed more than ever, Doctor ! since we got to Russell Square.”

Mrs. Wetherell tossed up her head ; “ Dr. Mc Alpin,” said she, in the most pompous and measured strain, “ you must excuse Mr. Wetherell ; nothing will ever alter his manners.”

I assured her I saw nothing to excuse.

“ That’s right, Doctor ! that’s right !” replied the little man, “ manners ! eh—humbug !”

Fearful of what might result, were this sparring to proceed farther, I enquired after my friend Captain Wetherell.

“ Tom ! i’ faith—you may ask his sisters—never hear from him unless he wants money—believe he is in Paris—no fighting now, Doctor ! By the bye,” continued he, “ did you notice that

young fellow with the girls ? it's young Laurel, the Deputy's son—a clever young man—was bred up at Oxford for the church, but preferred the counting house—a wise man ! one desk for another—eh ! Doctor—he ! he ! he !”

I was about to reply, when he interrupted me.

“ You see he is courting Kitty—so he came with us—the Deputy is a most substantial man—I would take his acceptance for a hundred thousand pounds as soon as a bank note—believe he will tell down pretty freely—I can give Kitty something, you know, Doctor—he ! he ! he !”

Here Mrs. Wetherell again broke out. “ I am really amazed, Mr. Wetherell, that you can expose your daughter's affairs in this way.”

“ Me expose ! what do you mean, my dear ? me expose ! do you call it exposing, because I tell my good friend, the Doctor, that the girl is going to be well married ? dem it ! I shall soon not be allowed to speak at all.”

I attempted to change the conversation, and asked whether he had brought any news from the metropolis.

“ Metropolis ! why it is a month since we left town—foolish thing to travel with one's own horses—much better to come in the mail—but

women will have their way. I have'nt seen a paper since I left town—stay ! there I am bouncing—I saw the paper in the Tontine at Glasgow—nice room that there news room. I told my clerk to send me the price current there ; and so I saw the room and read the papers.”

“ And what do you think of the Highlands, Madam ?” said I, addressing Mrs. Wetherell.

“ Think, Doctor ! how can you ask such a question ?” replied the little man before his wife could open her mouth ; “ women never think at all—if they did, they would not spend so much money on dress and nonsense—beg pardon, ma'am !” addressing himself to Miss Standard, who continued hanging on the arm of her father during this dialogue. Mrs. Wetherell, however, was not to be put down.

“ I beg,” said she, “ Mr. Wetherell, that you will speak on your own account. The Highlands—why, Sir, I think the inns very incommodious—that there one at Callander is the dirtiest I ever was in—no service at all. My two daughters aver that, if they had'nt brought their own maids, they coud'nt 'ave surviv'd—and I can't tell what we should 'ave done without John.”

“ And the charges are most tremendous,”

said Miss Stapleton, curling up her sarcastic lip.

“ Hold your tongue, Mary Stapleton,” said her sister ; “ you are not to pay for the journey. Mr. Wetherell can very well afford the money ; and the girls ought to see the world.”

Miss Stapleton was mute.

“ You ask us about the Highlands, Doctor !” again chimed in Mr. Wetherell ; “ why, d’ye see, they are more than a hundred years behind us in improvements—great capabilities, but nobody to suggest. I would have had a paper-mill in this here valley :—water the clearest I ever saw :” casting his eye upon one of the limpid, little runnels, which crossed the road ; “ plenty of it for either undershot or overshot wheels : eh ! Doctor, eh !” Then looking down the glen, he suddenly exclaimed, “ Dem it ! the girls are out of sight—verily believe they have run off with Dick Laurel !—he ! he ! he ! Good bye, Doctor ! good bye—will be glad to see you in Russell Square—not so snug as the old place—good bye !—will be glad to see you.” And away this amiable pair strutted before I could reply.

The Veteran, who, during this conversation, had taken his umbrella from under his arm, his usual prelude to some remark, now broke forth—

“ By Gad ! Doctor ! that little man is con-

foundedly out of his reckoning in coming here ; yet, I like him better than his wife :—who and what are they ?”

“ Why, my dear Colonel,” replied I, “ he is a substantial citizen of London. Old Tom Wetherell, for he is so called although he has scarcely turned sixty, is a rich sugar-baker in Rotherhithe, where he resided, until his daughters returned home, at the termination of a very expensive school education. It is true, as you must have observed, that Old Wetherell has little scholastic lore himself, yet he has spared no expense in the education of his children. The Captain, his only son, my friend, is an accomplished gentleman ; but I fear that the girls have too much of the mother in them ever to acquire the manners and the real politeness of gentlewomen.

“ The idea of living on the sugar-baking premises was too shocking to be endured by the young ladies, who persuaded their father to take a house in Russell Square ; for he stoutly resisted all attempts to get him father West : and they succeeded also in persuading him to set up an equipage. Mrs. Wetherell, who was the daughter of a hatter, of the name of Stapleton, in the Borough, and who had assiduously aided her better half in accumulating

the ample fortune which he now possesses, had no objection to this change. The ambition of the good woman led her to aim at being as fashionable as Deputy Laurel's lady, who had left their neighbourhood to occupy a handsome mansion in Park Place, Regent's Park.

"The other lady of the trio is Miss Mary Stapleton, Mrs. Wetherell's sister; she was left with a very slender provision, owing to the failure of old Stapleton, a short time before his death. She is one of those sharp-faced spinsters, who, by making themselves useful in a thousand little ways in a family, are prized for their services by the heads of it, and equally detested by the younger branches for their obsequiousness; who bear quizzing as a spaniel stands beating, and who revenge themselves by carrying gossip from family to family, and setting people by the ears.

"How unlike dear Aunt Bridget," said Miss Standard, who had been greatly amused by the Wetherells. "With all her eccentricities, Aunt Bridget," continued she, "is full of gentle and sympathetic feelings: she is a child in simplicity; open, warm-hearted, and benevolent in all her thoughts and deeds."

"Yes, by Gad!" said the Veteran, "Biddy is, indeed, full of the milk of human kindness:

I never heard her utter an illnatured remark on any one. Her foible, goood old soul ! is vanity : and, like most old maids, she will not permit herself to see the wrinkles which time is daily indenting on her forehead. But, she is a general favorite, Doctor!—what say you Carry, my dear ? Why, what is the matter ? your vivacity has beaten a retreat :—you look as demure as a quaker.”

I was, indeed, astonished at the complete change in Miss Ashton’s manner ; she had courtsied politely to Mrs. Wetherell, when we stopped ; but, from what I had observed of her quick perception of the ludicrous, and the felicitous manner in which she could render it perceptible to others, in description, I expected some pointed remarks from her on the absurdities of the Wetherells. She, however, continued silent : it was evident that something had gained full possession of her mind ; I had no hesitation in ascribing it to the same circumstance which had so excited my astonishment ; especially as it was coupled with the extraordinary and sudden cessation of Mr. Mordaunt’s attentions. But why such a circumstance should occur, were Mr. Mordaunt aware of the individual who had shewn himself, if that individual were really flesh and blood, was inconceivable :

—that he must have had suspicions of another kind was clear. I had no doubt of the feelings of the clergyman towards Caroline Ashton ; but I was ignorant whether his sentiments were known, beyond mere conjecture, to the object of his affection. Turning the matter over in my mind, I recollected that Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, has quoted the following passage from Picolemineus : — “ Amiability is the object of love ; the scope and end is to obtain it, for whose sake we love, and which our mind covets to enjoy.” Now, if we add beauty to amiableness, and intelligence to both, and enrich one individual with the whole, we shall have an object truly capable of exciting, fixing, and exalting love : and such was Caroline Ashton. As the lover sees all these qualities in the idol at whose shrine he worships, Mr. Mordaunt no doubt had done so : yet, it is equally certain that your true lover is always prone to jealousy ; and this, thought I, may be the unfortunate state of poor Mordaunt. I longed for the moment to arrive when I should have the opportunity of speaking to Colonel Standard on the subject.

It was evident that Miss Standard was the only person aware of the true cause of her cousin’s feelings ; but, with the tact of a woman,

she instantly drew off the attention of her father, by turning to me, and remarking “ that nothing surprised her more, than that people should take so long a journey merely to say that they had been at the Trosachs, without receiving any real gratification from their visit.”

“ The Miss Wetherells, I suppose,” replied I, “ have been reading Sir Walter Scott’s poem of the Lady of the Lake, and have filled their imaginations with the scene of its adventures.”

“ But you must admit,” said she, “ that before the resolution to undertake so long a journey for such an object can be formed, the imagination must be powerfully impressed by the perusal of the poem : you must also admit that such a circumstance implies a certain degree of sensibility and refined taste in the persons who can be so impressed ; and, if you allow that the Miss Wetherells possess these qualities, surely it is reasonable to suppose that the striking scenery in this romantic glen, so full of beauty and sublimity, is sufficient to rouse the sympathies of our common nature, and to fill the mind with pleasure : yet those people appear neither to see nor to feel them.”

I was pleased with the justice of these remarks ; yet I ventured to argue the point a little with my accomplished companion ; and,

therefore, replied that I should have no difficulty in proving my position.

“ I can readily suppose,” continued Miss Standard, “ that the parents are dragged into the expedition to humour their children ; but that such lively and animated young persons as the daughters appear to be, should pass without observing such objects as now surround them, is indeed to me extraordinary.”

“ So far we are agreed,” said I, “ in imagining that the parents are passive agents : now, with respect to the young ladies themselves, their perusal of the *Lady of the Lake* has pictured in their minds two objects, which have been much talked of, and are believed by many to exist as they are described : their curiosity to see these is awakened, and it is sufficient to induce them to undertake the journey, and to drag their parents into the scheme : then why, you demand, does not this curiosity also interest them in the numerous other objects so capable of exciting it, which every where present themselves ? I reply, that a more powerful principle than curiosity influences their general feelings and actions ; I mean habit. It is this power which has deadened the parents to every thing not connected with business and the city ; and it is the same principle, although less fixed,

operating through the town-education of these young people, whose minds are so occupied with artificial objects, dress, parties, concerts, the theatre and the opera, that they have become completely sophisticated, and have imagined a world of their own, which renders them indifferent to that which is real. I have no doubt the conversation in which they seemed so deeply engrossed related to some party."

"But you have admitted, said Miss Standard, "that the curiosity of these young ladies may be awakened by the description of natural objects ; why, then, is it not by the sight of them ?"

"Your remark is correct," replied I ; "but we must recollect that a spirited verbal description, besides raising ideas in the mind which perhaps are more pleasing from being obscure, is also calculated to produce a stronger emotion than the sight of the objects which it paints. The pleasure, derived from descriptive poetry, depends, in a great measure, on the ideas which it awakens in the mind of the reader ; he makes the scenes his own creation ; consequently, they are dearer and more interesting to him than the objects themselves, were they seen by him without his imagination having been previously excited.

“ I will illustrate my argument by a quotation from one of the most imaginative of our living bards* ; it is the description of a countenance such as you have often contemplated :—

‘ One face is pale
In its own pensiveness, but paler seems
Beneath the nun-like braidings of that hair
So softly black, accordant with the calm
Divine that on her melancholy brow
Keeps deepening with her dreams† !’

“ The prototype of this picture would not, generally, excite an emotion equal to the description ; and, yet, who can look upon such a face without being deeply affected ?”

Miss Standard gazed at me, for an instant, with an air of surprise—whilst a slight blush overspread her countenance.

“ The Miss Wetherells,” continued I, “ have thus formed their ideas of the place they have come here to see ; they are anxious to realize these ideas ; but, until the opportunity of doing so arrives, their thoughts are occupied with their usual pursuits, and they may be said to be blind to all other scenery, however well calculated to excite the most lively interest, and a high species of delight.”

* Wilson. † Unimore. A Dream of the Highlands.

“ Perhaps,” rejoined Miss Standard, “ after all, their only object is to be able to boast in company of having seen places so much read and talked of.”

“ By Gad ! Letty,” said the Veteran, “ you have fired a point blank shot into the citadel ; the Doctor’s hypothesis, in my opinion, is at least a league distant from the truth.”

Conversing in this manner, we arrived at the Inn. Caroline Ashton, who had all along seemed absorbed in the reverie which had so suddenly overpowered her, the moment we reached the door, withdrew her arm from the Veteran’s, and hurried to her apartment, followed by Miss Standard. I lingered behind until Mr. Mordaunt came up : he, also, seemed anxious to escape from observation, and evidently was aware that his emotion had been noticed by me. He hurried into the inn, and did not again appear until dinner was announced. An apology was made by Miss Bridget for the absence of the other ladies.

“ Caroline,” said the good old maid, “ has a headache, which will be better in the evening : but she is, Mr. Mordaunt !” addressing herself to the clergyman, “ such a favorite of her aunt and cousin, that they cannot leave her. They will all, I hope, appear at tea.”

“What is the matter, Biddy?” said the Veteran, laying down the knife and fork which he had just used, in making the first incision in a leg of boiled mutton; “what is the matter?”

“Nothing of great importance, Augustus! you will know by and bye,” said Aunt Bridget, with a nod, and the most significant look.

“Surely, Carry has not again seen the scoundrel who annoyed her at Killin? By Gad! now I recollect that, when that movement took place among the bushes near the dell, where that singular being, who frightened Letitia, appeared and attracted the attention of us all, Carry became pale, and clung to my arm; but I saw nothing:—did you, Mr. Mordaunt?”

The Clergyman, whose attention was roused by the remark of the Veteran, replied that he had faintly seen the figure of a man glide among the bushes; and immediately afterwards Miss Ashton fainted. “Pray, Colonel! may I enquire what happened at Killin?”

“Why, my dear Sir! Caroline is a fearless person, and used frequently to stroll out alone, to sketch. One day, last week, when employed in this way, near the waterfall at Killin, a scoundrel stole behind her, and, raising her in his arms, would have carried her off, by Gad! if she had not been rescued by some

Highlanders who were passing at the time. The scoundrel escaped ; but, as he had been looking at her for some time, and had been observed by her, she said that she should always know him again."

This explanation seemed to clear the countenance of Mr. Mordaunt from the expression of anxiety which it previously wore ; it seemed as if a load had been removed from his mind. He cannot, then, thought I, have seen the apparition as it appeared to me. This supposition involved the whole affair in deeper mystery ; and my anxiety to unfold my doubts to the Veteran became increased, the more I reflected upon the subject.

The events of this day, and the absence of Caroline Ashton, whose vivacity and wit were the life of the whole party, threw a languor over the dinner table ; and the cloth was scarcely removed before each person betook himself to his peculiar occupations. The Veteran, even before his second tumbler was replenished, and his third cigar was half smoked out, reclined back on his chair and fell into a sound nap : the Cantab scarcely felt energy enough to spread between folds of blotting-paper the plants which he had collected in the morning ; and Mr. Sketchly, whilst humming

a tune, looked oftener at his sketches than he touched on them. Mr. Mordaunt had retired, and was traversing the little esplanade in front of the inn, with Miss Ashton hanging on his arm, and Mrs. Standard and her daughter and Aunt Bridget in close conversation after them ; so that the Advocate and myself, having nothing better to engage us, were seated in a kind of half-reverie, picturing figures in the embers of a peat fire, which now rendered the little room oppressively hot.

“What an odd circumstance,” said Mr. Oatlands, as he beheaded a turk with the point of the poker which he had thrust into the fire on commencing his remark : “what an odd circumstance that Miss Ashton should faint when that man passed through the thicket, as we left the dell to-day.”

“Did you see him” said I ; “what kind of a person was he ?”

“The view I obtained of him was very indistinct,” replied the Advocate ; “he seemed as if he was observing the party, and wishing to be concealed. But why Miss Ashton should faint because a man passed, I cannot comprehend.”

I was about to answer his remark, when the Colonel awoke with an audible yawn ; and, seeing the tea equipage upon the table, and the

hissing vase throwing up its curling clouds, as he stretched himself, asked "where are the womenkind?"

In a few minutes the ladies entered, with the exception of Caroline Ashton, who continued upon the esplanade with Mr. Mordaunt; but, soon afterwards, both made their appearance. Miss Ashton never looked more lovely; and her vivacity had returned with all its delightful accompaniments. After bestowing a smile, and a slight inclination of the head to each of the party, "Doctor! I fear," said she, as she shook me warmly by the hand, "you must have thought me very rude, or very ungrateful, in leaving you so abruptly this afternoon, and not thanking you for your attention when I was taken ill; be assured I truly felt your kindness, and I shall never forget it; nor that of Mr. Mordaunt."

A smile of encouragement, I observed, beamed upon her countenance as she turned to Mordaunt in speaking these words. He, indeed, seemed to require some comfort: he looked most unhappy, and displayed an inquietude and anxiety which ill accorded with the renewed vivacity and the sunny light of Miss Ashton's countenance. The evening still, however, passed heavily along: the ladies with-

drew from the group around the fire to confer with themselves.

It is on such occasions as that which now damped the spirits of us all that the value of female companionship is strongly felt. At all times, indeed, when ladies are absent, it must be admitted that conversation slackens and becomes less animated ; blanks are left in it which their presence fills up ; it is, in truth, feminine wit, not less than beauty and grace, which confers a charm on society that nothing else can supply. One of these long and dreary pauses had taken place, when the Veteran, turning suddenly round, addressed me : You had a noble army in Sicily, Doctor !”

“ It was truly so,” replied I ; “ the enemy, under Murat, lay on the opposite side of the strait : we used to see him every morning riding along his line with his white feather streaming behind him.”

“ He was an excellent cavalry officer,” rejoined the Colonel, leaning forwards, and resting his left elbow on the thigh of the same side, whilst his right hand grasped firmly the opposite knee, his favorite attitude when he was desirous to enforce a point or commence an argument ; “ but he was nothing more.”

“ He was vain, and immoderately con-

ceited," said the Advocate, rousing from his reverie.

"I remarked that he was brave to the highest degree."

"I have heard," interposed the Veteran, "that no man could manage a horse so well ; and that, when seated on horseback, his appearance impressed the idea of one of the imaginary heroes of romance."

"He then realized the description of Percy :

To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch the world with noble horsemanship,"

said the Cantab, affectedly ; "I have no doubt that the organs of courage and pugnacity were very largely developed."

"He must have had a fine military air : yet, by Gad ! Doctor !" rejoined the Colonel, rising up, and taking two strides across the floor, and wheeling round as he made the remark, "he could not command an army."

"Nor manage a kingdom," said the Advocate.

"Nor conduct a retreat," added the Veteran ; "but we must allow, by Gad ! that a retreat is the test of generalship."

In admitting the justice of this remark, I delivered my opinion freely on the folly which

led to Murat's operations in the north of Italy, and his wretched retreat upon Naples with the remnant of his army. "As a king, however," I added, "he had a most difficult part to play at Naples."

"True," said the Advocate: "but, to gain his object, he adopted the worst feature of royalty—duplicity: although he endeavoured to put down the Carbonari when they opposed his measures, yet, he afterwards courted them, when he thought they would be serviceable in forwarding his views in the conquest of Italy. He has left behind him no fame but that of a military partizan and a witless monarch; a character for no virtue except that of generosity; and nothing to interest posterity in him, save the romance attached to the conclusion of his career, in his escape from France to Corsica, and the wild adventure which cost him his life."

"Yes," said the Colonel, erecting his tall figure as if at the head of his regiment, "although I regard him as one of those vagabond adventurers who have inflicted such incalculable evils upon Europe, yet I cannot, by Gad! help feeling some pity for him in the manner of his death. What has become of his widow and family?"

I replied that his widow resided for many years in Trieste, where she was much liked by the English merchants, one of whom had introduced me to her son Achille, in London.

“Eh! eh! to Achille Murat! by Gad!” ejaculated the Veteran, laying a most marked emphasis on his usual oath: “Pray is he like his father?”

“Not in the least,” replied I; “he more resembles Napoleon than Joachim. In stature he is a little below the middle size; has the countenance of a Buonaparte, and a quick, sparkling, intelligent eye. A good-humoured smile constantly plays round his mouth; and, although he is fond of disputation, and can make severe and sarcastic remarks, particularly if theology be the subject of conversation, yet his dissent is gentlemanly, and his arguments demonstrate both a sound, thinking mind, and considerable extent of information. He has nothing of a military air about him, and looks more like a plain country gentleman than the son of a Sovereign.”

“Of an adventurer,” said the Colonel.

“Nay, my dear friend,” replied I; “you must not enquire too closely into the origins of royal families; like scene painting, they require to be looked at from a distance. Colonel

Murat, for so he designates himself, informed me that he was a cotton-planter and a lawyer in Florida, where he usually resides, and which is the place of nativity of his wife, a very pretty little woman; who seems, however, better adapted to look after and manage his domestic affairs, in his present condition of life, than to grace a throne if he could even recover that of his father."

"God forbid!" ejaculated the Veteran; "but pray, Doctor, how does he live? in what degree of style?"

"In a somewhat retired manner, but very genteel: his pecuniary resources from his plantation and his legal practice in Florida, are, I presume, not great; but they were aided by an annual allowance from his mother, who is anxious that he should steer clear of all the rocks and shoals of political intrigue."

"I had no idea," said Mrs. Standard, who, with the other ladies, now again joined the group round the fire, "that any of the Buonaparte family could cherish such sensible opinions."

I assured her that the description of Madame Murat, which I had received from my mercantile friend, was highly favourable. Her propriety of conduct, agreeable manners, numerous accomplishments, and sound, good sense, had

rendered her very popular in Trieste ; and although, like her brother, with respect to the title of Emperor, she had the vanity to expect still to be called Queen, when spoken of or addressed, yet, in every other respect, she was unpretending, and displayed the greatest propriety and moderation.

“ Well ! well ! I would not grudge her that empty display of vanity,” exclaimed the Veteran : “ a travelling ensign you know, Doctor, is always, by Gad ! a captain.”

During this conversation, the Advocate, who had not before observed the depression in the countenance of his friend Mordaunt, perceived that he felt no interest in the subject under discussion ; and, therefore, he hastened to change it as soon as possible.

“ I fear, my dear Colonel !” said he, addressing the Veteran, “ if this conversation proceed, we shall get entangled in the net of political controversy, which I detest. You know we hold opposite opinions : but what of that ? You believe with me that the extreme animosity of political parties towards each other, only envelopes the question betwixt them in a darker mist of delusion, so that they often fight for a mere visionary object ; but whilst they are thus opposed, however severe

their attacks upon one another may be in public, that they may, nevertheless, feel the kindest affection towards one another as men. I know some Radicals, even, who are kind-hearted men; yet, as a party, I think them ultra, hot-headed, jarring, conceited, hypothetical speculators: more anxious even than the Tories for place; full of selfishness; and, when they talk of friendship, as much to be suspected as the fellow who impudently thrusts himself forwards and politely offers to hold your writing-case for you, whilst you settle with the guard on stepping out of a stage coach; and runs off with it as you are feeling for a shilling in the bottom of your purse."

"By Gad! Mr. Oatlands," rejoined the Veteran, "your remarks are correct. There are no good reasons why political animosities should disturb the harmony of private society. I was born and bred a Tory: and I was early taught that an aristocracy is essential to our welfare; that the immense property of our nobles ought to give them, as it assuredly does, power and influence; and that the liberty which would render property insecure, must tend to demolish itself. I believe that a state, which does not guarantee the security of property, is little better than a horde of robbers

preying upon one another. But, nevertheless, I have friends even amongst the Radicals. I believe that honesty is more natural to mankind than is usually admitted ; and I rejoice," looking at the Cantab as he spoke, " that my ignorance does not permit me to find out a rogue by the markings on his head, or by any other means, until he violate those compacts in the observance of which honesty consists. But, like you, my dear Sir ! I hate politics ; and, therefore, let us change the subject."

" Let us have another tale," exclaimed the Advocate. " I told mine this forenoon ; and, having fulfilled that part of our compact, I have a right to name the story-teller for this evening. I call upon one of the ladies : it is to the fair sex that we must look for the cultivation of the imaginative faculty in the present day. We live in a period, Colonel, in which the march of utilitarianism is narrowing the genius, and levelling every lofty and romantic sentiment in men."

These remarks of Mr. Oatlands roused the attention of the ladies, who had hitherto seen him only displaying the fire and playfulness of his nature, the buoyancy and spirit of boyhood, under the garb of manhood : they now heard

him giving utterance to sentiments accordant with the sobriety of his years.

“Come,” said he, “Mordaunt! you shall have a story from Miss Standard. Why, my dear fellow! do you look so thoughtful? Am I to imagine that you have dreamt of another benefice; and, on awaking, lo! it was a dream. Never mind! you know I have promised to introduce you to Lord B——. Now, suppose his Lordship before you: what will he say? Let me see—aye! in the first place, he will take you thus by the hand, not like a Lord Chancellor, but like a kind-hearted man; and then he will address you in this manner: ‘Mr. Mordaunt, I shall be most happy to second the wishes of my friend Mr. Oatlands. There are unhappily few men of talent and energy in the church; but, Sir! the vacancies, on that account, are less frequent than they would otherwise be. The order of Nature is reversed in that sacred hive: the drones live,—and the working bees die.’ ”

Mr. Mordaunt smiled, and was about to reply—when he silenced him by saying—“no thanks are requisite, my dear Sir! the recommendation of my friend Oatlands is sufficient.” And, then turning to Miss Standard, he re-

mind her that, as he had the privilege of naming the story-teller, he hoped she was preparing to comply with the demand made upon her for the amusement of the party.

Miss Standard, in vain, attempted to excuse herself on the score of incapacity ; and, although her mother also affirmed that Letitia never had displayed any imaginative talent, yet the Advocate was inexorable. At length, Miss Standard recollected that she had two letters of considerable interest which she had received from a friend, who was since dead ; and she begged to be permitted to read them, instead of drawing upon her own resources, or detailing any incidents that had come under her own notice.

Whilst Miss Standard retired to fetch the letters, Mrs. Standard opened her work-box, and took out her knitting : Aunt Bridget brought some worsted work, which her brother affirmed had been five years in hand : Caroline Ashton drew her chair close to that of her uncle, who lighted his third cigar ; and, spreading his handkerchief on his left knee, crossed his right leg over it, and placed himself in an attitude for listening : Mr. Sketchly, the Cantab, Mr. Oatlands, and myself, drew our chairs around the fire, and Mr. Mordaunt placed him-

self at the table, with his cheek resting upon the thumb and fore-finger of his right hand, in a position which enabled him to read every change of expression on the countenance of Caroline Ashton, without the intensity of its gaze attracting particular notice.

The group was scarcely seated, when the face of a person, apparently the same which I saw in the morning, appeared at the window: at that moment Mr. Mordaunt hastily rose; and, beckoning Mr. Oatlands, they both left the room. I lost no time in following them, determined, now, that so favourable an opportunity offered of resolving my doubts, not to lose it by delay. It was in vain: on reaching the esplanade, no person was in view, no retreating step was heard; the moon, which was rising, round and bright, had thrown the deep shadow of the mountain half across Loch Achray, over which a light vapour floated; and, except the monotonous drum of the waterfall behind the inn, the surrounding scene was as silent as the grave.

For a few seconds, we gazed at each other, with that expression which indicates astonishment: at length, Mr. Mordaunt enquired whether I had not observed a person looking in at the window. "Yes," replied I: "and it was a

face familiar to my recollection—I have seen it once before to-day.” He looked surprised ; and then said that he also thought he had seen it before, but he could not recollect when or where. “ But where is the person ? ” continued he ; “ if he had entered the house, we must have met him ; if he had fled in either of the only directions open to him, we must have heard or seen him : every thing is silent ; it is, indeed, most mysterious.” The Advocate, who treated the circumstance as an optical illusion, added, “ perhaps it is one of those familiar spirits which Jason Pratensis informs us enter into human bodies, cause melancholy, excite jealousy, terrify our souls with fearful dreams, and shake our minds with furies. Mordaunt, if it is an evil spirit, you shall exorcise the devil, should we meet him.”

Mr. Mordaunt smiled at the raillery of his friend : but he looked at me with an earnestness which seemed to say “ there is something very mysterious in this circumstance which we cannot explain.” I felt as much. The Advocate proposed to walk round the house. All was repose : nothing in the smallest degree aided in resolving our doubts ; on the contrary, the mystery in my mind was deepened.

On re-entering the parlour, we found Miss Standard waiting our return.

“Come, Letty!” said the Veteran, “now your audience is collected, begin your friend’s letters.

“There are two letters,” said she: “I shall endeavour to do justice to them; but it requires some nerve to read before so many.” Mrs. Standard and the Veteran gave her, each, kindly looks of encouragement; and, taking up the first letter, she began the narrative which forms the subject of the following chapter.

The Editor has given these letters as he found them in his deceased friend’s portfolio, with the addition only of an appropriate motto.

CHAPTER II.

“ Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediment.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE PARISH CLERK'S DAUGHTER.

 LETTER I.

“ So, my dear Letitia, you do not find your initiation into the *beau monde* as interesting as you expected: your remarks upon it are, however, vastly diverting; and, as there is a natural love of biography in all minds, I did not find the description of your company tedious; indeed, I should have been glad of a little more of your gossip. How different is my situation here to yours, my dear friend! No person, residing solely in the metropolis, or even in a detached country residence, can form an adequate idea of the society in a small town remote from London!

“ My early life having been diversified rather more than that of most young women of my

age, I am, perhaps, more competent than many to form a comparative estimate of the peculiarity, the prejudice, the want of—(I must borrow an expression from our lively rivals)—the *savoir vivre*, which pervade these provincial dens of lean parsons, and leaner old maids, of small attorneys, and of fat dowagers.

“ It was on a Saturday afternoon that I was ushered into the new scene which this ancient borough presents for my contemplation. A rich, sunny gleam tinged the waters of the small and smooth river from which Averford derives its name ; and threw, over the broad meadows contiguous to the town, that glow of warmth and cheerfulness which seemed to invite the young peasantry into the ample meadows.

“ There are many goodly houses in Averford ; some, indeed, of large dimensions, and approachable by handsome gates, and broad, old-fashioned stone steps. But these spacious abodes lack tenants ; and as scarcely any trade is carried on in this aristocratic little town, there are few inducements to new settlers. The owner, perhaps a crabbed old bachelor, or a widower with only one child (and that not a young man, a thing unheard of in Averford); dwells in the house of his forefathers ; cultivates a large, old-fashioned garden ; hunts ;

goes to church ; attends parish meetings ; and does anything but give parties, or enliven the long, long street, by causing a little stir of carriages within it. One inspiring sight, however, greeted my inquiring glances as the carriage slowly drove through the town. The sound of the church chimes, proclaiming the hour of six, summons, in this primitive place, to their respective tea-drenchings, all the visiting and visitable inhabitants of Averford. Fain would I term this holy monitor a *cat-call*, from the number of tabbies which it rouses from their afternoon slumbers, to enter upon the agitating divertisements of a pool of commerce, or the intricate mazes of a Cassino table. I must not, however, be severe, lest my strictures upon the maiden gossips of this town may seem to convey some general reflections upon the venerable body of spinsters to which I am, alas ! but too likely to belong ; if some one, whom you know, returns from Spain, altered in affections as he doubtless will be in person."

Aunt Bridget here interrupted the reading with a remark on the heat of the room ; and took out from her reticule a green fan of very ample dimensions, which she moved with great rapidity.

" But to resume my description. These

important chimes having just doled out the last notes of "Oh dear, what can the matter be?" as I entered Averford, one of the usual parties had assembled, and, as we drew up to my aunt's door, I had an ample opportunity of observing the arrangement of an Averford rout; for in the house next to that of my aunt sat a circle of nine ladies, each with a tea-cup and saucer in her hands; a reverend gentleman, by no means a chicken, forming the only beau of the party.

"I sighed as I entered my aunt's abode, and thought of by-gone days; but I was consoled by the kindness, the affectionate welcome, with which my aunt greeted my first visit to her residence. You are still, I believe, not only ignorant of my aunt's precise situation and character, but of the circumstances which attended her youth. She is now a placid and somewhat pretty old woman; and, by the serenity of her demeanour, and the still, unruffled appearance of her humble tenement, you would suppose that neither care, nor any great excitement of gaiety, had ever either caused her gentle heart to throb, or had disturbed her low-roofed apartments with sounds of agitation.

"I have never disguised from you, my dear friend, that my ancestors, though respectable,

were lowly ; yet may I enter fully into the beautiful sentiment of Cowper, who, though by no means a favourite poet of mine, has touched some of the finest feelings of our nature in his lines on his mother's picture. What is it that he says ? I am not very apt at a quotation—

“ Yet higher far my proud pretensions rise,
The child of parents raised into the skies.”

“ My aunt, the sole remaining member of my family, except myself, was the daughter of the Parish Clerk of Averford. She had one sister, my mother, on whom my fondest recollections still rest with an aching, longing desire to recall to my memory the fading traces of her countenance, her kindness, her manner.

“ My mother, though of humble birth, was the toast and belle of Averford ; for she had been early selected as a companion by one of the proudest Averford spinsters, and had received a careful, and perhaps, for her situation, a too refined education. My aunt, although good-looking, was far inferior in person, and especially in grace, both of form and manner, to her sister ; but the fondest affection subsisted between them, not only unmingled with jealousy on the part of my aunt, but heightened by the pride with which she viewed the accom-

plishments and attractions of her sister. Alas! for what purpose were such gifts of nature conferred upon her, but to raise her from a station in which, if despised, she was yet contented; and, if lowly, she was secure!

“ It happened that the young curate of the parish church lodged in the house of his clerk, about the time when my mother had just attained her eighteenth year. Of Mr. Percival, my father, you have often heard me speak; but my acquaintance with you, my dear Letitia, has been of too recent a date to allow of my communicating all the particulars of his sad history. Of him I speak from hearsay; for his short career was closed before I had the power of observation, or of recollection. He was an elegant and highly bred young man, of quiet, contemplative habits, and, at that time, as I have been assured, of the strictest practical piety. Unfortunately, he was, by birth, connected with nobility, being the nephew of an Earl, and thus allied to one of the loftiest of those old aristocratic families, of which perhaps soon even the traces will be lost; since the sons of Dukes are now allied with vocalists, and the theatrical heroines of tragedy are in our days, in so many instances, raised to the dignity which they have sustained

with mimic excellence on the stage. In my father's youth, such elevations were at least unfrequent, if not unheard of; and, nurtured in the loftiest notions of an ancient house, the poverty of that branch from which he sprung only added in his mind an additional motive not by any low connection to add degradation to the other mortifications which his family was sometimes destined to endure.

“ Without any certainty of rising in the church, my father had been bred up to that profession; and he was, at the period of which I am speaking, merely a curate, upon eighty pounds a year, with a small allowance from his father. He was now seven and twenty years of age. As I have said before, I have no recollection of him; but I am told that he was tall and personable, and bore on his countenance the impress of that high descent which was his misfortune, and the expression of that gifted and ardent mind which ought to have sustained him in his troubles. At first, the young Curate was little seen by my grandfather's family; and, although an object of extreme curiosity and speculation in the town, he was seldom visible in the streets, where every passing footstep might be counted. His chief inducement for taking up his abode at my

grandfather's, had been the good character of his clerk, and the quiet and orderly appearance of his apartments. His sitting room is still almost in the same state as when he first occupied it, and it still constitutes the principal *receiving* room of my aunt; for to call it a drawing, or withdrawing-room, would seem absurd in a house where a dinner party is a thing unheard of, and where there is no one to withdraw from but the cat and the servant. This parlour, in short, is a long, low-roofed room, leading into one of those irregular and yet delicious gardens which are often met with in houses of a mediocre description, where the word horticulture has not yet been deemed translatable, and where experience, and not system, regulates the arrangement of a garden. Of arrangement, indeed, there is little enough; the multiplicity and abundance of flowers, and of flowering shrubs, being the chief points considered. Hence that luxuriant flush of bloom along the sunny borders which gratifies the sight without dazzling; and hence that superb variety of the gay, the rich, the delicate, and the soft, which is presented by the careless succession of our commonest plants.

“ My Aunt still tends her small domain with uncommon care and skill. It is her only active

amusement ; yet she tells me that, gay as is her larkspur, rich and majestic her crown-imperials, and delicately fair her Provence roses, her garden now falls far short of what it was in *her* father's time ; for he, good man, between his duties of burying and christening, was thankful enough to doff his demi-clerical character, and to assume that occupation, our taste for which we are said to derive from Adam. But I must not digress ; for I have materials to engage your attention more than sufficient to fill several letters.

“ My father, as I have observed, was of a grave and somewhat reserved disposition ; and, when he entered my grandfather's family, as little thought of becoming companionable with any member of it, as of ringing the church bells himself instead of his host. Yet his pride, I suppose, was soothed by the respectful, but not obsequious manner of the old man, and his reserve dissipated by the unobtrusive yet cheerful aspect of the daughters. I know not how it was ; nor by what witchery such a change could be wrought in the sentiments of one whose only inheritance was his pride of ancestry, and whose sole worldly consideration rested upon an unblemished genealogy. It was even still more singular, that, during two years, my

father, neither by word nor look, revealed that attachment which he had been unable to subdue. Often has he avoided my mother in her evening walk along the avenues of the Priory, or on the green meadows which are watered by the river Aver. Sought and admired by others, and by many superior in wealth, and equal in connections to my father, my mother sometimes wondered, and perhaps with regret, at the reserve and even dislike manifested to her by the young and handsome Curate. Yet, as no woman can remain entirely ignorant of the sentiments with which she has inspired a man who loves her, it is probable that she may have divined and secretly approved the honourable motives which impelled Mr. Percival to avoid obtruding his attentions upon one to whom he was unable to offer his hand. It was not, however, long, before the gossips of Averford discovered a reason for that increasing seriousness which rendered Mr. Percival, notwithstanding all the good qualities which he possessed as a Christian minister, by no means a favourite among them ; they had also ascertained the cause that he was “high,” and eschewed their pools of commerce, their rubbers of Cassino, and the parties of loo ; and that he listened with an indifference, which

they thought contumacious, to the interesting disquisitions upon sequences, flushes, great Casses, and little Casses, “ Pam, be civil,” et cætera, upon which they rung changes, and in which the three Miss Pontains, and the seven Miss Perkins’s, were not only au-fait themselves, but the causes of au-faitness in others ; witness the dexterity and celerity of Mr. Waker, the Curate of another village, and the aptitude of Mr. Simpkins, junior, son and heir to a Simpkins who had long flourished in the higher circle of the whist-tables.

“ My father, I have said, was no favourite with the venerable spinsters of Averford ; however some of the most juvenile of them might have laid traps for him.”

Here Aunt Bridget shifted her chair, and furled and unfurled her fan with unusual activity.

“ He was not, however, the only object of their speculations, and of their scandalous surmises ; for higher game was at hand : nor was it disregarded by the dexterous markswomen, who, if the days of archery were over, could “ shoot out their arrows privily,” as David says, “ with their tongues.”

“ About two miles from Averford there is a house, now deserted and desolate, of respectable antiquity, and of considerable importance,

both in point of situation and of magnitude. This mansion, which has now fallen into the hands of one who loves it not, is seated upon a small eminence, and is backed by very considerable woods, of the finest timber in the neighbourhood. It belonged, in my father's day, to a young lady, the sole surviving member of an opulent and ancient family, who had long possessed the house and fair domain in question.

“ ‘The heiress, who was the envy of the malicious part of the country, and the admiration of the goodnatured portion, had succeeded to her honours by the death of two brothers, both older than herself. Of these, one, the most promising and exemplary of characters, had died of consumption, and had imparted that heart-rending disease, by infection, to his mother, who had tended his last days of gloom and of hopeless decline, with that bursting solicitude and unwearied minuteness of attention which none but a mother evinces. It was not long after the eldest hope of the family had been conveyed to the tomb of his fathers, that his sorrowing parent betrayed symptoms of the fatal complaint by which even the maturer blossoms, as well as the tender buds, are sometimes cut off with a relentless hand. It is pro-

bable that the progress of the disorder was accelerated, not only by grief for the dead, but by the most poignant sorrow and anxiety with regard to the living.

“ The surviving son of Mrs. Courtenay was a young man of a most singular character. Destined for the army, he had been separated early from the domestic circle, to which his brother had been devotedly attached, both from habit, from a principle of duty, and from a feeling of affection. The younger brother (alas! if report speak true, how common is the case!), corrupted by depraved associates in a public school, had lost all congeniality with that home where affection was the household deity, and where innocence was the pervading genius. Accustomed early to all descriptions of vice, and inured to the language of the dissipated, and to the folly of the fool “ who hath said in his heart there is no God,” the young Courtenay had yet a peculiarity in his mode of acting and of thinking viciously, that distinguished him from that herd of the gay, the intemperate and the abandoned, who, like Comus’s band, display but little variety in their debased condition of wickedness. There was a degree of headstrong selfishness in the younger Courtenay, which seemed to have been engen-

dered in him to make the wretched more wretched, and to plunge the sinking spirit into the deepest abyss of misery. After a course of profligacy, which it is of no use to describe, he died also, and the estate of Sudley Park devolved upon his sister.

“ Miss Courtenay had possessed it four years, as a minor, when Mr. Percival went to reside at Averford, and had, at that time, just attained what are called years of discretion. The misfortunes of her youth, the loss of some friends, the misconduct of others, the indifference of those that remained to her, and the consciousness that there existed in the family constitution the seeds of a fell disease, had all contributed to form in her an uncommon character. Whilst the deprivation of those whom she most loved had softened and saddened her, the bad conduct of another member of her family had excited her ambition to rescue her name from the disgrace which that member had brought upon it. Subsequently, the necessity of thinking, and the power of acting for herself, gave her an independance of character which some might call eccentricity. It is one of the advantages of wealth and rank, that it is easy to those who possess them to be disinterested. Generosity, and a perfect devotion to her

friends, were strong points in Miss Courtenay's nature. With all this, she was proud, and sometimes satirical: but it was the pride of habit, and of early instruction; for the great land-holders, whether male or female, are, in our country, and perhaps in most others, taught to cherish pride as a necessary accompaniment to, and manifestation of, their dignity. With regard to her satire, it never proceeded from her consciousness of superior talents, nor of her ascendancy over others, but was the instinctive display of a vigorous and discerning mind, acute in seeing imperfections, and averse to any concealment of its crudest perceptions. It was generally thought that the stings of her sarcasm were inflicted with justice, and that, when she thought them merited, she was no respecter of persons. The affluent, the self-righteous, the proud, the fashionable, shared alike; and it is wonderful with what patience even those people, who are generally on such happy terms with themselves, will sustain the attacks of the well-born, and the beautiful, and the opulent. "It was her way"—"she meant nothing by it"—"it was all the exuberance of high spirits:" such were the excuses often made for slights, and even ridicule, which, had they proceeded from lowly or unpopular mem-

bers of society, would have been affronts of the first magnitude.

“ It was not until after Mr. Percival had been two years, or rather more, at Averford, that Miss Courtenay came of age. This event was to be celebrated with the utmost splendour upon her own picturesque estate ; and, even in this, she shewed her peculiar nobleness of character. Whilst she allotted to her tenantry their own place in the gala, and assigned them the abundance in which they alone found satisfaction, she rigidly precluded any distinctions being manifested in the invitations, which were extended to all the visiting neighbourhood alike, regardless whether this person was disdained by that, whether the man of faultless escutcheon was seated side by side with him who had soiled his fingers in a reputable trade. For once, she said, she would have her own way. Her guardians and her chaperon had kept her long enough in a cage, and encircled her with a fence-work of exclusion. What was the use of seven thousand a year, but to make oneself beloved, and others happy ?

“ Of course, my mother, whom I shall call henceforth by her name Grace Middleton, and her sister, were not considered as forming a portion of the visiting neighbourhood. Their

father's inmate, however, went ; and Grace, as I have heard, looked wistfully after him as he drove away to the resort of the gay, and doubtless of the attractive assemblage. It was not, however, very late when he returned ; and, as it was a glorious summer's evening, Grace had loitered long amid the flowery domain into which his sitting room opened, and was enjoying, until a late hour, the splendour of the moon-beams, whilst luxuriant nature around her poured forth its scented tributes of nocturnal sweets to evening. A step entering from the house aroused her, and she saw Mr. Percival approaching. His eye was lighted with the excitement so recently passed, of lively society, and agreeable interest. Yet his manner to Grace, as ever, even in his most unguarded moments, was respectful ; for he knew no aristocracy of modesty and virtue. But, on this evening, an unwonted softness characterized his mode of addressing her ; her very deprivation of those enjoyments, which she was eminently calculated to share, her exclusion from scenes which she was formed to adorn, seemed to draw forth an interest towards her which he had hitherto vainly endeavoured to conceal, if not to subdue.

“ ‘ Grace,’ he said, ‘ I have seen many lovely,

many accomplished, and attractive women, among the gay throng which I have just left; but I have seen none whom, had you been there, you would not have equalled, if not excelled. Your lot seems to have been cast amid the humbler scenes of life; but believe me that the time may come when it may not be so. Give me your word, Grace,' pursuing her as she moved along somewhat quickly, 'that you will not bind yourself to any man till all hope of our being united is irrecoverably lost. When that hour of despair comes, when hopelessness succeeds to the exertions which I *shall* make, I will release you, if you then wish it.'

"It were folly to say that Grace was surprised at this language, or that she had not had ample reason to believe that this engagement would be urged upon her. She knew that the proud heart of the young Clergyman had, for some time, been devoted to her with an affection firm as it was generous. For herself, those who have been similarly situated can only know her sentiments. Well-assorted engagements have their enjoyments, their many advantages. The course of their true love is smooth, and reflects nothing but pleasant images on its glassy wave. But the devotion of unpropitious love is heightened by the very

consciousness, that it has no auxiliaries to look for from others. The disapprobation of some, the opposition of others, the indifference of many, to our inmost feelings, makes us cherish the more fondly the object which it requires so firm a grasp to hold. To this, in the case of Grace Middleton, and of those circumstanced like her, additional considerations give force. A woman of generous feelings is deeply penetrated, when a man, greatly her superior in rank, professes an honourable and disinterested attachment to her. His preference of her, to those with whom fate seems to have associated him, flatters not only her vanity, but engages her gratitude ; and a secret triumph is naturally felt, that, whilst the rich and proud would gladly receive the homage of that individual, his warmest affections are given to one who has not worldly advantages to bestow in return.

“ It was, however, with apprehension and reluctance that Grace gave the pledge required of her. She feared to involve one whom she idolized in the miseries of parental displeasure ; she feared to bring upon him the minor annoyances of animadversion and contumely. She dreaded, above all, lest the time should come when he might himself repent of a precipitate and ill-omened engagement. All this she

urged, and yet (what arguments has not love !) she was persuaded into giving an assurance which was fatal to the repose of both. But I have, I am sure, sufficiently stayed your curiosity till the next packet.

“ My aunt’s little tea-table is arranged ; the bright brass tea-urn is singing ; and she summons me to infuse the tea—a task I would gladly decline, as it is, in her opinion, one of little less importance than the passing of an Act of Parliament, or an order in council at least. Adieu.”

At the conclusion of this letter, the eye of Caroline Ashton, which, during its perusal, had rested on her cousin, met that of Mr. Mordaunt. It was instantly withdrawn ; but a blush overspread the countenance of the lovely girl, and discovered what she could no longer conceal. Mr. Mordaunt’s countenance expressed a marked surprise. What can this mean ? thought I : but the question had scarcely arisen in my mind when Miss Standard proceeded.

LETTER II.

“ Since I last wrote, my dear Letitia, I had hoped that the air of this house might be influential in producing adventures ; but, if the genius of romance once presided over it, he

has fled, and yielded his domain to that of celibacy, who presides, I believe, over Averford. I have seen but two of the male species since I wrote to you : the one was the postman, the other the hair-dresser. So you see I am likely to exercise the virtue of constancy without much difficulty. But to return to my story.

“ You may readily suppose that the attachment of Grace and Mr. Percival was kept secret from all except her sister, for she positively refused to have any concealments from that beloved companion of her infancy. To tell you the anxieties, the hopes, the perplexities attendant upon their mutual secret during the course of the ensuing year, requires far more skill than my untutored pen can command into its service : one source of uneasiness to Grace she suffered unknown to him who was most concerned in it. This was the strong report which began to prevail in Averford, of the attentions paid by Mr. Percival to the heiress of Sudley Park. It was impossible that Grace could shut her ears to this report, although her sister kindly endeavoured to keep it from her ; and, when it reached her, strove to avert its bitterness by professions of perfect confidence in the honour and attachment of Mr. Percival. It was not until long after my

mother's marriage that she heard how the affair really was.

“ Her pride, however, was nettled by the suspicion that, whilst her lover was amusing himself in her society, his serious views were fixed on one much more suitable to his rank and expectations. It was, unfortunately, just at this time that Mr. Percival was summoned on some business to London, whither Miss Courtenay had gone to pass the winter months, —I mean the actual Winter, not that impostor, Spring, who now passes in fashionable language for his hoary-headed predecessor. All the town rang with anticipations of their approaching wedding. The encouragement which had been already given to Mr. Percival was of a character too decided to be mistaken; and, if he had shewn no demonstrations of attachment, still it was well known that he had never paid attentions to any other lady. How did poor Grace's spirit sink within her! she clung to hope; but that state in which hope is alternately succeeded by despair is worse than a certainty of wretchedness. Her mother noticed that she became thin, and that her Hebe-like countenance was shadowed ‘ o'er with that pale cast of thought’ which memory of the absent, and regret for the past, induces. It was in vain

that letters, glowing with such affection as is felt by an ardent but refined mind, and couched in such terms as such a mind chuses to express affection, came, more frequently than angel visits, to soothe her anxious spirit: reading, unhappily, with a jaundiced eye, she found, in those expressions of fondness, some alteration, some coolness, which justified her apprehensions, and rendered every thing short of an interview unsatisfactory.

“ Meantime, let us look a little into the state of Miss Courtenay’s heart. Placed upon such a pinnacle of prosperity, she had yet retained the passions of an enthusiastic girl, whilst she acquired the determination of an indulged, self-willed, and independant woman. Adulated, and really admired as she was on the day of her first meeting with Mr. Percival, by a contrariety not unusual, she turned with indifference from those who paid her homage, to him whose pride it was never to flatter. She was struck by his personal attractions, but still more with that grace and dignity of deportment, without which mere excellence of flesh and blood challenges no other species of admiration than that which is due to a fine breed of horses or a prize ox. She was interested, upon nearer acquaintance, by the evident traces of

reflection, aided by sedulous culture, which were manifested in Mr. Percival's conversation, although without the slightest display ; for his taste was too fastidious to admit of that which, either in man or woman, betrays a deficiency in real delicacy of feeling. Miss Courtenay was further disposed to consider all these points as heightened in her romantic mode of viewing them, by the circumstance that Mr. Percival was poor, but of high descent. Of wealth, a mere accidental distinction, she thought little, and less, that she had, of late years, associated nothing with it in her own mind but care and responsibility ; but high birth was, from the very romance of her character, a considerable adjunct, if not a requisite feature, in her delineation of imaginary excellence. This foible of hers is not to be justified ; and a skilful utilitarian might have demolished it at once in argument ; but he would never have been invited to Sudley Park again ; for the fair Amabel was a despot in her faith, and would have cordially hated the whole sect, had they existed in her time. No : middle-aged, hard-hearted men, hot from the counting-house, or turned into marble from Cambridge, may advocate doctrines which justify their own disagreeableness, and make selfishness, dryness, and

calculation fashionable ; but the young and generous will long resist such indigestible mental food as their dogmas offer, and will form a barrier, I trust, against such methodical innovations upon our natural perceptions of what is right."

" She writes well," said the Cantab, interrupting the reader ; " but she knows little of political economy : but go on."

" I digress sadly, and must pray for your indulgence, with the usual child-like promise that I will do so no more. Since even the learned and philosophical Bishop Watson acknowledges his satisfaction that his ancestors were ' neither hewers of wood, nor drawers of water,' I do not think Miss Courtenay so very inexcusable in her predilection for high birth. But, if she loved rank, she valued nobility of soul far more. She fancied that Mr. Percival possessed this ; and she yielded to her predilection for him with that carelessness of consequences which was a part of her character. Accustomed to obtain every thing that she desired, she never dreamt of not receiving a full measure of return for her disinterested devotion. She listened to him with eagerness from the pulpit : she thought of him, and of him only, in private. Every wish of her heart was

centered in obtaining his approbation. She dressed to his taste, she sang his favourite songs, she read his favourite poets; if he suggested an improvement in her grounds, it was begun instantly; if he offered the slightest counsel upon her behaviour, it was received with unfeigned gratitude, and acted upon without delay.

“ So marked a preference could not escape the observation of her chaperon, and of humble dependants, who are ever on the look out to know which way the wind blows: neither could it be altogether unperceived by Mr. Percival. Not to be flattered by it, was not in human nature, and he appreciated, as a gentleman ought to do, regard so disinterested; but never did his fidelity, still more his affections, waver between the humble object of his secret love and the rich and beautiful Miss Courtenay. Meanwhile, still detained in London by some family matters, he was not only exposed frequently to what would have been to other men temptation, but he was the cause of much misery to Grace, and eventually to himself. It was now, for the first time during her short life, that her health began to decline. That mysterious irritation produced on our bodily frame by mental sufferings began to wear away a constitution

naturally vigorous, although linked with a mind of strong sensibility. When my father returned, he was shocked at the change in her :— her bloom, often still bright, but evanescent, was succeeded by the pallidness of a statue ; the tremulous walk ;—her spirits too easily excited to joy, too readily depressed till the weakened frame relieved itself by tears.

“ These indications alarmed Mr. Percival greatly, both for the present and the future ; for he saw how inadequate Grace now was to contend with the undiminished obstacles to their marriage, or to sustain the possible final result of a secret and imprudent union, embittered by poverty.

“ Spring came ; but it found the once blooming and happy Grace still languishing and declining. Her fears of Percival’s constancy were indeed exchanged for a renewed reliance upon his faith ; but the dread of embroiling him in difficulties, and the thousand nameless anxieties attendant upon a long engagement, were too great for a mind of no vulgar stamp. Her father, between the duties of burying and christening, never thought of love ; and, when he said ‘Amen’ to the marriage service, thought far less of the cause of that ceremony than of its effects : for the marriage fees, doled out

slowly and perhaps reluctantly by the poor, and bestowed with ostentation of love and money by the rich and genteel, added to the sort of importance which the deputy manager of the sacred performance obtains, were far more in his thoughts than the sentiments of the respective parties towards each other. He helped on his clerical master with his surplice, reverberated his words through the long-drawn aisles, or waddled after him into the church-yard, without ever dreaming that the proud young Curate could condescend to bestow a thought on any one of his family.

“ Meantime the romantic attachment of Miss Courtenay was increased by uncertainty, and, strange to say, by the evident reluctance of Mr. Percival to unfold his sentiments to her. As she had unconsciously learned never to doubt that all she wished must be hers, she unresistingly indulged the idea that he was secretly devoted to her; but that his laudable pride, and his hatred of fortune-hunters, alone prevented an avowal. Her nature was also proud, and replete with womanly feelings. She could not resort to any little contrivances, or indelicate demonstrations of passion, to draw forth the sentiments which she fondly hoped one day to hear. Whilst things were in this state, an

incident occurred which tore the veil from the eyes of this generous and enthusiastic young lady, and placed her in a situation of all others the most trying to our sex.

“ It was on a fine evening, in the month of May, that Miss Courtenay took it into her head to enjoy a solitary walk. She often loved to escape, in this manner, from the hired assiduities of the people about her, to whom she was a lavish, but not a partial mistress ; for she could not persuade herself that, whilst their interest forms so predominant a motive to their services, affection could have any great share in them. Milton loved to walk ‘ by hedge-row elms on hillocks green,’ and so did Miss Courtenay ; for the walk she chose had no other remarkable features. It was, however, a favorite resort of the Averford old maids, on account of its general dryness (a quality perfectly in unison with them),—and also because its well-trodden path—not wide enough for four, but a little too wide for three—was well adapted for scandal.”

Here Aunt Bridget half rose from her seat, then sat down again, spread smooth her apron, and looked at Mr. Oatlands:—a spoke was broken in her fan.

“ It was likewise intersected, at sundry distances, by little gates, which afforded sweet

opportunities for a little gallantry, when the two Miss Sprats, ætat. 58 and 52, happened to be escorted by the beau of our Parish, Mr. Nicholas (commonly called Old Nick), ætat. 61.

“ Miss Courtenay had proceeded half way through this terrace walk, towards Averford, when her course was arrested by a sight which plunged her into an agitation, such as those who know what it is to be suddenly undeceived in a cherished hope can only tell. She beheld the idol of her affections walking slowly towards her, in earnest conversation with a young and beautiful woman, who leaned fondly on his arm, and whom he seemed to be supporting and soothing with that tenderness towards the gentle and the sick which forms so lovely a trait in the manly character. At times they stopped, and leaned, as for support, upon the little gates just mentioned, when Miss Courtenay saw, with heart-thrilling conviction, that the hand of the fair sufferer was warmly pressed in that of Mr. Percival, that her eyes were turned to his with that expression with which an early and pure attachment lights the countenance of beauty.

“ To return unperceived was not impracticable ; because the attention of the lovers was so much engrossed with each other, that they

had not seen her. But to return was not in character with Miss Courtenay's disposition. 'I will not retire,' thought she, 'as a spy—wretched and hopeless as I am. Since all is lost, I will show him nobly that I know his secret, and nobly that I can bear it.' The effort was made; and, as she passed Mr. Percival, and showed him that courtesy which was habitual in her to all, his cheek was far more suffused by blushes than her own. Yet her smile, though bright, was transient; and her bright eye, lighted up as it was when she passed him by the excitation of the moment, was almost immediately afterwards suffused with tears.

" 'Who is that beautiful creature?' enquired Grace, as she passed rapidly by.

" 'It is Miss Courtenay,' replied my father.

" 'Then,' said Grace, half playfully, half reproachfully, 'I do not wonder that you stayed so long in London.' "

Mr. Mordaunt fixed a determined gaze on Caroline Ashton, whilst a tear half started into his eye.

" It was some weeks after this little occurrence, that Mr. Percival received a note from Miss Courtenay. I have formerly read it, and, as far as I remember, it ran thus :

“ ‘ Do not accuse me of impertinent interference in your concerns, if I wish to see you, relative to the living of Chorley : it has become mine by recent purchase. I say no more until I see you.’

“ You may now guess the result ; for I think a *woman* can enter into the generous motives by which Miss Courtenay was actuated. The interval after her meeting my father with Grace was passed, first, in learning to think of him as one whom she had no right to love, and for whom she was not allowed to feel an interest. This was a hard lesson, and she found that nothing is so difficult as to cease hoping. Fortunately for her, a call was made upon her generosity ; and it is more easy for such characters as hers to act well, than to regulate their feelings in a state of repose from action. By her inquiries she learned who Grace was, and then the whole truth flashed upon her. She contrived also to make my Aunt aware that she had some scheme to benefit Mr. Percival, in which her sister was included. She then took her measures accordingly ; and, as to the rich all things of that nature are easy, she shortly accomplished the object of her desire.

Mr. Percival reached Sudley Park in no

small degree of agitation. With what various feelings he entered the spacious and tasteful library, in which he expected to find Miss Courtenay, it is impossible to do more than conjecture. He found her not there, however; but in a few minutes she entered. Her dark and beaming eye sank beneath his inquiring glance as she came towards him; but it was the confusion of the moment. Yet her cheek flushed as she extended her hand towards him. In that hand she held the documents relative to a valuable living, which she had sacrificed a considerable portion of her property to purchase. She briefly explained to him the particulars necessary to make him aware that the rectory was his, and then awaited his reply. Mr. Percival was overpowered with contending feelings: he felt, but feared, the debt of gratitude; for he had partly guessed the sentiments towards himself which the beautiful heiress had but little endeavoured to conceal. The title deeds almost dropped from his hand. Miss Courtenay, however, quickly relieved his perplexities.

“ ‘ My motives,’ she said, ‘ may be strictly questioned by many, and doubtless will be so, when I shall have to render an account of the talents entrusted to me. ‘They are sim-

ply these : I believe that you will conscientiously discharge, in this new office, those duties which you have so well fulfilled here. I, for one, have to thank you for some serious impressions which may, perhaps, avail me in hours of sorrow.' The tear stood in her eye ; but she proceeded. ' But I believe, I hope, that you will also have the happiness of sharing your duties with a being deservedly beloved.' She paused ; for a deep crimson suffused the face of her auditor. ' I am right, am I not ? Forgive me for touching on a subject so dear to you.' Her voice faltered as she spoke, and her trembling lips refused almost to do their office. ' Mr. Percival,' she resumed, in an earnest and almost solemn tone, ' your family will be averse to this union ; your pride of birth, your early prejudices, are against it ; but, oh ! be faithful to a heart whose first affections you have gained ; place her in your own rank—support her in it courageously, firmly !' Mr. Percival raised his eyes to gaze on the noble-hearted woman, but she was gone.

“ Well ! in a month the bells of Averford rang merrily for the wedding of the handsome young Curate to the Clerk's daughter. My grandfather was so overcome at the circumstance that he could not have said ' Amen' at his

daughter's wedding. Luckily for the proprieties of the thing, he fell into a grave the week before, 'sprained his ankle, and was obliged to have a deputy, both to give his daughter away, and to perform the responses. The bride looked more than usually beautiful, although there was a delicacy in her complexion which still augured ill health ; and it was even then prophesied, by some of the croakers of the place, that she would not enjoy her prosperity long : but the more favourable observation was, that her ill health made her look the more like a lady, and fitter to be the parson's wife. My Aunt has still a picture of her in her wedding dress. By the bye, I think wedding dresses in general the most tawdry, ill-fitting things. I have a friend who wears hers regularly every year, and supposes that a dress made for her when she was thin and pretty can suit her when she has had a dozen children. But my mother's was a very simple attire. Her rich hair, untutored by the fashion of the time to travel upwards, when nature intended it to shade her fair forehead, was suffered to appear in unadorned ringlets under a white lace veil, the present of my great great Aunt Tabitton, who sent it to her from Northamptonshire. I forget the other details of her dress ; nor will you expect me to

give you a dissertation on her dress with the same precision as the *Ladies' Magazine*, or the *Belle Assemblée*. But this I know, that she not only looked so lovely, that the ladies, in allusion to a novel of Miss Burney's, called her *Evelina*, but also so elegant, that some of the genteelest people in *Averford* were proud to speak of her afterwards as their acquaintance. Indeed, it was remarkable that those who had not deemed her worth a glance, as they passed her, now began to speak of her as 'their friend *Miss Middleton*, their charming protégée, their sweet and interesting early acquaintance.'

"For my father, I am told that he was the handsomest bridegroom that had been seen in *Averford* for a century : but that is not saying much. However, he looked like what he was, the Honourable and Reverend *Mr. Percival* ; and, I may say, conducted himself as such. My mother trembled as the solemn service proceeded ; but the tears were all shed by her sister and her fond mother, the latter especially, who foresaw, in her child's elevation, estrangement from her humble home. *Miss Courtenay* was not present ; for she was absent from her home, on a hasty excursion to the *Lakes*.

"Well,—and here my story might end well, and you might be left to conjecture years of

happiness to the fond pair whom I have described at the altar. But, alas! how few years have elapsed since that period, and here am I alone, an orphan,—my poor Aunt and I only remaining of that generation of her family!

“ The first affliction that my parents sustained was in the untimely death of Miss Courtenay. She lived but little at the Park after their marriage, but entered into the gaieties of a London life,—happy, perhaps, to escape her own thoughts; and, being idolized in society, she enjoyed it with the enthusiasm natural to her age and character. Yet, I am told, that, even in her brightest moments, traces of sadness were perceived upon her countenance when the neighbourhood of Averford was remarked upon. Her kindness to my parents continued unabated; and by her request I received her name. How shall I communicate the fate of this lovely and beloved lady, my father’s sole benefactress, who befriended him at the expense of her own happiness? She died in consequence of breaking a blood-vessel, the prelude to that ravaging malady to which her mother and brother had fallen a sacrifice. By her will I am, as you know, entitled to what is termed a gentlewoman’s fortune—£200 a year. In some memoranda found

amongst her papers, she specified that she felt no desire to enrich me, even if the claims upon her estate had enabled her ; for she had herself experienced how little happiness a large fortune entailed upon woman. The rest of her personal property was divided, with some eccentricity, amongst relatives and friends ; but the same concern for the lowly and unfortunate, and indifference to the great and prosperous members of her family, was apparent in this last memento. Taught from my infancy to love her name and memory, you must forgive my dwelling upon her last actions with fond prolixity.

“ The rest of my narrative is a painful one. My mother became more and more feeble after my birth ; yet I had attained my fifth year when I lost her. Of this event I have a confused remembrance. I recollect awaking in the night ; a ringing of bells, a running to and fro, for a time aroused me, and then I fell asleep again. In the morning, they told me I had a little sister born ; but scarcely was I dressed than they whispered to each other that she was dead. I have a faint recollection of seeing a little baby in a neatly ornamented cradle, and remember wondering at its stillness, and touching its cold cheek with my finger. It was indeed dead ! yet its little cap was neatly plaited

round its face ; and, by its pretty bed-gown so carefully arranged, I thought at first they had laid it down to sleep : so slow is the apprehension of children concerning death !

“ Then I was sent away from home, and was told my mamma was very ill, and that it was thought better that she should not see me ; but I found afterwards that she had asked for me. Alas ! I soon forgot her, in new scenes and with new companions. I was brought back to console my father on the day of my mother’s funeral. Well do I even now remember his altered face ; the work of years seemed to have been effected on his countenance. I remember his kissing me hurriedly, and then sending me away again. I remember too the deep, muffled tones of the church bells, the association with which is sometimes revived by similar tones, and never fails to produce, even in my gayest moments, a seriousness almost amounting to awe.

“ And so my father and I were left alone together. It was many years after my mother’s death, that he put upon my finger a ring. ‘ Amabel,’ he said, ‘ in a calm but solemn tone, ‘ a few hours before your mother was taken to eternal rest, she took from her finger the rings which I had placed upon it at the moment of

our union. One of these she gave to me,—the first, last pledge of that love which will never die in me,—which now, I trust, yet exists in her, in her purified and blessed state. Another she gave to your Aunt; this one, my child, she begged me to reserve for you.’

“ It was not long after this, that I was left an orphan. The seeds of death were in my father’s frame when he for the first time brought himself to speak to me of my mother; for he was, as you know, a reserved man, and, to me, an object of fear as well as of love.

“ When he believed, and humbly hoped, that his time of rejoining those that are dead in the Lord was about to arrive, he spoke often, and indeed loved to talk to me of my mother. He spoke of the time when we should all three be united. He laboured hard, and, I trust, not ineffectually, to promote in me an habitual dependence on that Being who is to the desolate ‘ Father and Mother, and Brother and Sister.’ By his desire, I received the last sacrament with him, although I was then scarcely fifteen years of age. You may believe how indelibly that solemn occasion is impressed upon my memory. You will not, I hope, too soon be made to comprehend with what anguish of heart I followed my last remaining parent to

the grave. Alas ! Letitia, it was long before I could bring my mind into that holy state that I could thank God ‘ for all his servants departed this life in his fear and love.’

“ Adieu. You asked for a letter ; I have sent you a volume. Write soon ; and believe me to be ever—ever yours,

AMABEL PERCIVAL.”

The male part of the auditory were greatly delighted with the easy and pleasing style of these letters ; and the display of good sense and right feeling which they indicated as characterizing the mind of the fair writer. I confess that I felt all the mother mounting to my eyes, on listening to the high and generous conduct of Miss Courtenay ; and, in the exposure of my weakness, I was consoled to see that the most apparently volatile of the party, the Advocate, was also melted into tears.

I can listen to tales of distress and misery, which harrow up the feelings and bring tears into the eyes of others, without being subdued ; but I never yet heard the recital, nor read of any act of warm benevolence, or of noble philanthropy, without finding my eyes instantly suffused with moisture. I can read of Lefevre’s distress unmoved ; but, when my Uncle Toby

in parting with his son, slips into his hand sixty guineas, tied up in an old purse of his father, in which was his mother's ring, and bids "God bless him," I am utterly unnerved, and cry like a child.

"I am undetermined, Miss Standard," said the Advocate, "whether most praise be due to the fair writer of these excellent letters, or to her friend who has done them so much justice in the reading. What think you, Miss Bridget?"

"Indeed, Mr. Oatlands," replied the good old maid, "the diction of the letters is beautiful; but it is to be lamented that there is less of the true Christian spirit in Miss Percival than ought to be: I could not have thought that she had so much satirical acrimony in her composition. She might have spared a little of the cayenne in her remarks upon old maids."

"True, my dear Miss Bridget," said the Advocate; "but they are darts which fall harmless in the present day, when no such beings exist. I am advancing into the vale of years myself, and do not see so well as formerly; but, truly, I have not traced a grey hair on any lady above forty, for many years."

Miss Bridget looked confused; and perceived that more eyes than one were turned towards her curls.

“ Wigs all—by Gad !” said the Veteran, “ but they cannot fill up the wrinkles.”

“ Why should they ?” rejoined Mr. Oatlands. “ I even prefer grey hair to black wigs ; and, in my humble opinion, no character is more respectable, or more agreeable, than a well-informed woman of fifty or upwards, whether spinster or wife, who has the good sense to support her years with sobriety and dignity.”

Mrs. Standard bowed ; and Aunt Bridget smiled in a manner which was creditable to her good sense and natural feelings.

As it was now late, a plan was proposed for ascending Ben Venue on the following day, and for previously breakfasting in the beautiful pass of Bulloch-nam-Bo.

“ As I shall not accompany the party,” said Mrs. Standard, “ I shall have every thing provided for a comfortable breakfast.”

The ladies soon retired, and the whole group separated for the night.

Having brought up my journal to this point, I contemplated the indulgence of my customary quarter of an hour’s nap in my chair before retiring to bed. I was lulled to sleep by the

monotonous sound of the waterfall behind the inn, which Dugald had not incorrectly concluded would suit my fancy ; but the drowsy power had scarcely pressed upon my eyelids, when I dreamt that one whom I had long endeavoured to forget stood before me in all her original loveliness and purity, smiling like an angel. She laid her hand softly upon mine, and her lips moved as if she was about to speak, when I awoke. The impress of her presence had been so vivid that I gazed around me to determine its reality ; and some minutes elapsed ere I could convince myself that it was a picture of the imagination. It had brought with it, however, recollections of the most painful kind ; I rose from my chair, and threw up the window of my little room to change the train of thought by looking out into the night.

Whoever, to fill up an idle hour, shall cast his eye over these notes, may smile at this movement ; but it is one of a few peculiarities which I have fostered on principle ; and which have been the sources of much of the little comfort which has sustained me amidst the cares and corroding anxieties which have tainted my cup of life. When any thing occurs to annoy or to vex me, when my mind is irritated or my temper ruffled, in order to sooth the one and to

calm the other, to stifle discontent or to mitigate suffering, I endeavour to withdraw as it were from the affairs of man ; and, by the contemplation of Nature, to elevate my thoughts above the little perturbations of human society, by those feelings of gratitude and humility which are ever awakened in reflecting on the supreme wisdom and the boundless benevolence of the Deity, as displayed in his works. I rose, therefore, and threw open the window.

It was the same lovely night as the preceding, except that the stillness and solitude were increased by the lateness of the hour, for it was near mid-night ; and a broader stream of light was reflected from Loch Achray, owing to the altitude of the moon, which was now approaching the zenith. The freshness of the air, and the contemplation of the peaceful scene upon which I gazed with delight, soon composed the agitation of my spirits ; and I was considering the propriety of retiring to rest, when a boat slowly crossed the light on Loch Achray, and the sound of a flute, as if played upon the water, attracted my attention.

“ What strange beings love makes of us,” thought I : for it instantly occurred to me that the flute-player was Mr. Mordaunt, who had adopted this method of indulging the romance

of his passion for the lovely girl so exclusively the object of his attention. The air was the "Di tanti palpiti" of Rossini : I had never heard it executed with more expression and delicacy of feeling. It was soon followed by one of those lively and engaging Swiss airs which I had often listened to with additional delight from the charms which they acquire when sung amongst their native mountains. As I perceived that the boat neared the shore, and three individuals landed, I expected to see the Clergyman return to the inn ; but, after waiting upwards of half an hour, I was convinced that my conjecture was incorrect ; yet, who else would visit the Lake at that hour ? Mr. Mordaunt had also given us a specimen of his skill in touching the instrument which I had just heard ; nevertheless, why did he not return to the inn ? Where could he be gone ? These were questions that presented themselves, which I could not solve, and which threw a mystery over this little incident. Has this serenading, again thought I, any connection with the mysterious appearances of the individual who has twice shewn himself to-day ? The question could not be answered ; but it did not tend to lessen the obscurity which hung over both incidents. I might puzzle myself with endeavouring to re-

move the veil which darkened them ; but no effort of thought could lead to the truth : I determined, therefore, to wait until time and opportunity performed what could not be affected at present ; and, closing the window, I retired to bed, and soon sank into a sound and refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER III.

“ The innocent Morn—

When, from the slow unfolding arms
Of Night, she starts in all her charms,
And o’er the glorious earth is borne,
With orient pearls beneath her feet ;
All round her music warbling sweet,
And o’er her head the fulgent skies
In the fresh light of Paradise.”

WILSON.

I WAS conning over in my mind these beautiful and appropriate lines of Wilson as I descended to the esplanade, where those who proposed to climb Ben Venue had already assembled. It was, indeed, such a morning as the poet describes ; and its influence was perceptible upon every face of the little group : the smile on the lovely and open countenance of Caroline Ashton, as if the offspring of the pure, deep, blue ether, over which the rising sun now shot his radiance, beamed with a renovated, “ gladdening grace ;” the meek and pensive look of her cousin seemed tempered with a greater depth of serenity ; the buoyant

spirits of the Advocate were expending their exuberant playfulness in gamboling with a greyhound, the property of the landlord ; the expression of Mr. Sketchly denoted the inward satisfaction of a truly benevolent heart, happy in itself ; the Cantab's countenance indicated, to use the language of the Cantab himself, a large development of the organs of gratification and anticipated enjoyment ; the only individual who did not harmonize with the feelings which the morning inspired, was Mr. Mordaunt, who looked grave. He looked, indeed, as if sleep had not pressed his eyelids ; and again arose the idea in my mind that he was the musician on Loch Achray : but where had he spent the night ? That was a question which was to be resolved before my suspicion could be received as fact.

“ What ails you, Mordaunt ? ” said Mr. Oatlands, commencing a train of good-natured raillery on his friend's melancholy visage. As he concluded his tirade, he looked into the face of Caroline Ashton : and then, without waiting for a reply from Mr. Mordaunt, he turned round and informed me that he had taken the liberty of sending forward honest Dugald, along with the Colonel's servant, with the sumpter basket, cloaks, and umbrellas. “ You

will find," said he, turning to the ladies, "a glorious breakfast ready for you in the pass;" and then scampered off down the glen with the fleetness of a deer, and the greyhound bounding at his heels.

"What an extraordinary person," said I, gazing after him; "he retains all the buoyancy of early youth."

"Yes," said Mr. Mordaunt, whom this remark on his friend seemed to awaken from a reverie; "age, in Oatlands, has augmented the powers of a most extraordinary intellect, without, in the smallest degree, impairing the youthful vigour of his bodily frame, or deadening the fire and playfulness of his boyhood. You have never heard him plead, Doctor; I wish I could obtain for you an opportunity of judging of his powers of oratory."

I bowed; and, not seeing my old friend the Colonel, enquired whether he and Miss Bridget had deserted us?

"They have," replied Miss Standard; "but my father has sent a commission for you to supply his place; and to take Caroline under your care."

"I feel highly flattered," replied I; "but"—and I cast my eye upon the Clergyman, who seemed again absorbed in thought.

“ Nay, Doctor !” said the lively girl, placing her arm in mine ; “ Letty has delivered her orders : there is no declaring off : my uncle, you know, is your superior officer ; therefore, you must obey, and take me for better for worser.”

This remark raised a faint smile in Mr. Mordaunt, as he offered his arm to Miss Standard : the Cantab and Sketchly had already paired off ; and, in this manner, we proceeded down the glen.

I had now an opportunity of judging of the character of my lovely and animated companion ; for, hitherto, I had observed her only at a distance. I found that the excess of her animal spirits was tempered by a high and elevated tone of mind, richly stored from the best sources of both ancient and modern English literature ; that she was an enthusiastic admirer of Nature ; possessed a chaste and correct taste for poetry, her acquaintance with which was not confined to English or rather British Poets, but extended to that of Italy and Germany ; whilst, at the same time, her disposition was so open and unsuspecting as to introduce you at once into the knowledge of all that she thought and felt. I have already described the character of her beauty ; it was heightened in

conversation by a sparkling brilliancy of eye, and a smile which spread over her features an impress of angelic sweetness, perfectly enchanting. “No wonder that Mr. Mordaunt is captivated,” thought I: “except in one other individual, never have I beheld such an approach to that which is surely the semblance of an inhabitant of heaven. Is it possible that falsehood or deception can ever dwell in such a frame? O, Amelia!—but I will not upbraid your memory! You were unhappy in the wrong you did me; and, now that the silence of the grave covers your errors, my injuries shall never disturb its repose.” As these thoughts passed through my mind, a suppressed sigh escaped me, which was observed by my companion.

“My uncle, Doctor!” said she, not daring to look up while she spoke, “has so often talked of the liveliness and inexhaustible hilarity of your spirits, that I am almost tempted to put a very rude question to you; and that deep sigh emboldens me still more to do so:—may I inquire what has caused an alteration so striking in you?”

“Your uncle, Miss Caroline,” replied I, “has too highly coloured the portrait which he has drawn of his friend; when we were first

acquainted, I was young, thoughtless, and had experienced few of the cares of life."

"Does so short a course of life (for you cannot, Doctor, plead age) so overpress the mind as to force it to vent its wretchedness in sighs? if so, I never wish to see forty."

"God forbid! my dear young lady! I trust you may never experience those feelings which produced the evidence of their existence in my bosom: it was not intended for your observation."

"Pardon me, Doctor!" rejoined she; "I am rude to remark upon it; but my uncle has spoken so often and so much of you, that I almost imagine that I have known you from my infancy, and am privileged to ask you so impertinent a question. Tell me," said she, changing the subject, "how you like Mr. Oatlands?"

"I scarcely know what to think of him," replied I.

"He has been," continued Miss Ashton, "our travelling companion for nearly three weeks: the more we see and know of him, the more singular and amiable he appears. Although he looks so juvenile, yet, he is a married man, has a large family, and, I am told, a most agreeable wife; but I understand

that she is wholly devoid of that vivacity which is his characteristic."

"Indeed!" said I.

"He is esteemed," continued my fair companion, "one of the commanding orators of the Scottish bar. I long to hear him speak in court; for, occasionally, when he becomes energetic in argument, his manner, and his language, mingled as it is with Scottiscisms, is so forcible, that I am satisfied he must be very eloquent when earnestly engaged in his profession."

"His friend Mr. Sketchly," said I, "has informed me that his public influence is great in the Scotch metropolis. He says that his talents early displayed themselves; and that he has fully realized the promise of his youth. He was one of a constellation of distinguished characters, who, at the close of the last century, were pursuing their studies at the University of Edinburgh, and constituted the members of a literary society, the *Speculative*, which has been long celebrated for sending forth extraordinary men; those brilliant lights, in the literary and scientific world, whose radiance sheds such lustre on Scotland, as poets, historians, statesmen, and philosophers. His associates there have all effected something to secure

their names from oblivion ; while some of them, by the power of talent and unwearied industry, have attained situations of high distinction in the state ; nevertheless, Mr. Sketchly affirms that fame is not the idol of his friend's ambition ; that he might have possessed both place and power, had he aimed at them ; but that his desire is to be thought an honest man, leaving greatness to follow as it may."

My lovely companion here interrupted me by stating that she had received the same account from Mr. Mordaunt.

" His highest pleasure, Mr. Mordaunt informs me," continued she, " is in the periodical visits of a few of his earliest friends, the companions of his boyhood, who meet once in three or four years, at his residence, to retrace former enjoyments in their school-day haunts, and to indulge in those vagaries which he calls high jinks, so much prized by you Scotsmen. Nothing astonishes me more," added she, " than the contrast between your countrymen at home and abroad. I have seldom seen a Scotsman beyond the border who was not as demure as a quaker."

" I admit the accuracy of your remark," my dear Madam," replied I : " may I venture to infer that it is only abroad that you have

found my countrymen so insipid? at least, Mr. Oatlands is an exception."

"A notable one, indeed," exclaimed the laughing girl; "I like his very absurdities; there is so much of nature in every thing he does: although I sometimes imagine that he supposes heaven to be a Highland mountain; for he declares that he knows no happiness greater than that produced by ranging over the heathy shoulders, as he expresses himself, of these giants of the north. You will see him to-day in all his glory."

I ventured to remark, that the feeling respecting mountainous districts is not peculiar to Scotsmen, but common to all mountaineers.

"Come, Doctor, you must explain that to me," said she, looking in my face with a smile so fascinating as to convert her request into an irresistible command. "I have," continued she, "so often heard the saying, that I am dying to learn its explanation."

The smile, the musical sweetness, the delicacy, of her voice, as it struck my ear, and the playful, yet earnest manner of her request, startled me, and renewed those painful recollections which had drawn forth the sigh which attracted her notice. I involuntarily stopped and gazed at her; but it was Caroline Ashton

who hung upon my arm. She was too polite to notice my confusion ; and, quickly recovering myself, I remarked that the explanation which she requested was by no means easy ; and, although I had the most complete conviction of the truth of the feeling, yet, I had scarcely reflected on its causes.

“ Nay then,” said she, “ give me your opinion, such as it is.”

“ Well,” replied I, “ you will not deny that all our most firmly rooted predilections are those formed in boyhood and youth ; and, admitting this, you wish to know what those are which implant a stronger affection for home in mountaineers than in the inhabitants of less elevated regions ?”

“ That is exactly my object.”

“ Well then, in my opinion, they may be resolved into two ; namely, the impression which mountain scenery makes upon the mind, and that necessity which a thinly peopled country, difficult of access, and seldom visited by strangers, imposes upon its inhabitants to form close bonds of amity with one another. With respect to the first of these causes, which may be considered, if not the most powerful, at least the most natural, it is evident that a mountainous district is better calculated to fill both

the eye and the imagination than a flat one. The mind, also, shares in the expansiveness of the visual boundary : in ascending a mountain, we experience a loftier elevation of soul ; we seem to ourselves greater and more important beings, as a portion of that Nature which is so amply spread out before us. There is, besides, another mental feeling more powerfully roused in a mountainous than in a flat country, arising from the nature of the region preventing almost the possibility of enclosure : it is that of liberty, of a higher degree of freedom, and the absence of that exclusion which is invariably experienced in a cultivated and well-peopled district. In climbing the heathy summits, and ranging the wooded tracts on the mountain brow, although we are aware that it belongs to some one, yet, it appears as if it were common property ; we roam, therefore, free and unrestrained, and recognize ourselves, in the fullest sense of the expression, as the lords of the creation. This feeling of liberty is, also, favorable to the indulgence of that indolence which an ancient philosopher has regarded as the chief good ; and that pride which not only prevents the Highlander from engaging in any thing like steady labour, but makes him indifferent about those comforts which are the reward of industry

in more civilized and less romantic regions. The pastoral life, which is common to all mountaineers, greatly favors these habits."

"But how does your position, Doctor," said my fair companion, "accord with the military habits of the Highlanders?"

"All warlike nations," replied I, "are rude nations; for war has always been the occupation of a proud and an indolent people: indeed, it may almost be defined, a state of irregular excitement and inaction; and, probably, from this condition of the mind may be traced the honorable idea which is attached to the business of war. Idleness has been, in all ages, the characteristic of the gentleman and the soldier; and the pride of sentiment, which elevated localities cherish in mountaineers, is favorable both to the indolence of peace and to the excitement of war. With these feelings, how strongly is the impression of every object of the sublime and beautiful imprinted on the youthful mind. The rivers, the lakes, the glens, the rocks, and the mountains, alike attract and rivet the affections: and even the mists, the storms, and the superstitions connected with them, enhance these attachments."

"True," said Miss Ashton, "your remark is correct: it is the same feeling which gives

childhood its buoyancy ;——but, I interrupt you.”

“ On the contrary,” my dear lady, replied I ; “ you honour me by your attention. I fear, however, that my explanation is dilating to a sermon, and will fatigue you.”

“ Far from it ; I feel the most intense interest in every word you utter,” said she, smiling ; I can, occasionally, be as attentive as a judge :—do proceed.

“ Well then,” continued I, “ such impressions made in youth are indelible. In every step of our progress in life, the retrospect affords the highest gratification ; and, when absent from our beloved mountains, we long to renew the enjoyment of those pleasures, the separation from which we never cease to regret. The rude music of the country, a song or a traditionary tale, touches this sympathetic cord of our affections ; in a moment, the recollection of the past awakens with all its busy train of associations ; the desire of returning home takes firm possession of our thoughts ; and, in some instances, so powerful is the influence of these desires on the nervous system and the corporeal frame, that actual disease steals upon us, if the wish of returning home cannot be gratified ; and the consequences are frequently fatal.

“ With regard to my second position, it cannot be denied that the inhabitants of a thinly peopled district, of difficult access, have greater reasons for drawing closer the bonds of amity than those of more peopled countries. The strong character of the friendships of mountaineers is owing, also, in a great measure, to their living in small communities almost resembling families : thence hospitality is the plant of the soil, and is almost as essential to the existence of the Highlander as the heath and the peat of his mountains and bogs. The necessity of union among the scattered families of such pastoral districts for the sake of natural protection, probably gave origin to clanships ; and the bonds which linked the families and the individuals of a clan, all bearing the same name, became indissoluble. The amities thus formed, being cherished through life, the heart of the Highlander has always been powerfully attracted to the spot of his nativity. Such feelings are unknown where friendships are founded upon casual incidents, and loosely cemented.”

“ Your idea of the origin of clanships suggests to me,” said my fair and attentive auditor, “ a question. How do you reconcile the love of liberty, which you affirm is created and fostered among the mountains, with feudal servitude, a

remnant of which still exists in the Highlands ?”

“ Your question, my dear madam,” replied I, “ is a natural one. The servitude in feudal clans, although a species of slavery, is yet an agreeable bondage. The Highlander, who takes arms at the command of his chief, or conforms to his orders in peace, is not like a mercenary alien who serves merely for pay. He considers himself a relation of his chief; he probably bears the same name, he has climbed the same rocks, forded the same rivers, and joined in the same sports with him when young; and he still regards himself as his kinsman. Feudal aristocracy, therefore, is much less *galling* and less opposed to liberty than that of more civilized communities, in which the service is paid in money. In the feudal system, the service resembles that of a son; it is regarded as an act of duty and respect to one who the party thinks is naturally his superior; in more civilized communities, it is an affair of barter: when the service has been paid for, all interest in the hireling ceases. The feudal lord, also, is, in a great measure, dependent on his retainers; and, therefore, he cannot maltreat or neglect them with impunity: on the contrary, the wealthy aristocrat, who pays for the services of his inferiors, considers that his money

clears all scores between him and them ; and, considering that he is bound by no obligation, he carries himself with more haughtiness towards them ; whilst they, on their part, are as indifferent to him as he to them : and thus, contempt and pride prevail on one side ; envy, hatred, and a wish to pull down, operate on the other. 'The consequence of all this is a proud and more overbearing aristocracy, and a more turbulent and unmanageable commonalty, in countries otherwise free, than in feudal states.'

I had scarcely concluded my prosing explanation when we arrived at the loch. The whole party was already in the boat, with the exception of Mr. Mordaunt, who was evidently waiting to hand Caroline Ashton into it. As she gave him her hand, the blood mounted to her face ; and, although the politeness of the Clergyman led him to seat himself beside Miss Standard, yet, I could perceive something more than usually expressive of comfort in his look, from this trifling incident. Sketchly and the Cantab having taken the oars, in a few minutes we landed in a little creek at the base of Ben Venue.

As Mr. Oatlands had promised, we found breakfast prepared for us in the pass, close

to a beautiful cascade, formed by one of the mountain streams.

“ You have never, I presume,” said the Advocate, as he handed Miss Standard to one of the stone seats which he had pitched around the table-cloth spread upon the swarth, “ breakfasted in such a parlour before.”

“ Never,” replied she ; “ but I greatly admire the taste which selected such a spot for our repast.”

The breakfast, to which ample justice was done by all, was greatly relished ; especially a dish of fresh mushrooms which had been gathered by Dugald, and peeled and boiled in their own juice, a mode of cooking this delicious, edible fungus which I strongly recommend to all true gastronomes, as superior to any other.

Having left Dugald and the boatmen, the rear guard of the party, to employ a phrase of the Veteran, in possession of the remnant of our repast, we were led by the Advocate to a little, leafy recess, to rest for a short interval before ascending the mountain, as I had pronounced it hazardous to encounter so much fatigue immediately after our meal. We had scarcely reached the spot, when the attention of

every one was arrested by a lively Spanish air on the flute, played evidently at no great distance.

“ I shall see who this musician is,” said Mr. Oatlands, as he quickly sprung from the ground, and proceeded towards a rock in the direction of the music. The air and the style of the music was not new to me : it was, in fact, the same which had excited my surprise in the night ; but, as Mr. Mordaunt was at my side, my curiosity was greatly raised to see the performer ; I therefore followed Mr. Oatlands closely ; and, on looking down from the summit of the rock, which we had ascended, we perceived three men seated at its base. Two of this party were habited as Highlanders : the third, who was the flute-player, was a tall, dignified looking man, seemingly on the verge of fifty, with a plaid thrown around him in the graceful folds of the Roman toga. We could not see his face, owing to a large, slouched, Spanish hat, which he wore, shading it in the direction whence we looked at him. He held the flute in his hand ; and, resting upon the rock beside him, was a basket-hilted Highland sword, or claymore ; and, at his feet, lay a noble Spanish hound, which started up, and seemed uneasy, as if suspicious of the approach of strangers.

“Down, Carlo! down!” said his master; “you prick up your ears, old boy—what has alarmed you? there are no guerillas here.”

“He snuffs the wind of a red-deer among the brakes, perchance”—said one of the Highland gentlemen.

“He would display no alarm in that case,” added the other: “some one must be near.”

“And were it so,” said the first speaker, laying his hand on the sword near him, “what then? Tell me, Mr. Mackenzie, what is your opinion of the position in which we are placed, should our scheme not succeed?”

“Why,” replied the person addressed, who, from his language, was apparently a Scotch lawyer—“if what you say be correct, the act cannot be illegal: no caveat put in by the opposite party could stand—their appeal would fall to the ground, seeing that we have a right to claim restitution of authority—the lords would refuse an inhibition: but, if you are on the wrong scent, then we shall find a snug birth in the Heart of Mid Lothian, and your neck, maybe, will feel the pressure of a hempen collar.”

“I will risk it,” rejoined the tall man, rising, and drawing up his whole figure; “I would risk my salvation for it.”

“Well! well!” said the other Highland

gentleman, "let us change the subject;" and he remarked that the air which we had heard was extremely beautiful.

"Yes," replied the flute-player, "it is my greatest favorite: you know it well, Captain Mac Alister; you have heard it on the Peninsula from the very lips that first sung it to me:" and he breathed a deep sigh.

"Come, come, my good friend! let us have no relapse into your melancholy mood: we have no such music amongst our hills."

"Yet," said the first speaker, "your national music pleases me; and the more so as the words and the air generally accord admirably. Your plaintive music, however, is better than your lively airs. Do sing me, again, the ballad of the Chieftain's daughter, which delighted me so much yesterday in the dell, between the lakes."

"It is too melancholy for your present mood," said Mac Alister.

"Not at all; I am in a melancholy mood, and you must humour me," was the reply.

Captain Mac Alister requested the use of the flute to aid him to give the proper pitch to his voice; it would not do. "I cannot indeed sing to-day," said he, returning the instrument; "but I will recite to you some lines of a friend of mine, composed in this very spot." He

then looked cautiously around him, as the dog seemed still uneasy and starting, and recited the following stanzas in a manly, clear voice :

The morning rose without a cloud
 On heaven's etherial blue ;
 The fleecy mists that faintly shroud
 The brow of Ben Venue
 Were melting in the liquid air,
 Like the vows of faithless man,
 Sworn to some fond, confiding fair,
 Who pauses not to scan
 The truth of vows ;—for love is blind,
 And unsuspecting woman's mind.

The dew was glist'ning on the thorn,
 And hung with gems the heath'ry brae ;
 The wild bee wound his tiny horn,
 While, pois'd upon the limber spray
 Of graceful drooping birch, her song
 The linnet trill'd :—a matin lay,
 High over head, with quaver long,
 Caroll'd the lark in air mid-way ;
 And the murmuring runnels o'er their bed
 In many a playful ripple sped.

Why leaves the maiden her downy bed
 To brave the mountain air ?
 Why lifts she now her pillow'd head ?
 Is she oppress'd with care ?
 Or does she, like the timorous hind,
 So onward speed, and haste
 Some fond expected step to find
 Amid the dewy waste ?
 —Nor star, nor compass, lovers need
 Their bark to guide, their steps to speed.

No love the maiden's bosom heaves
 With sighs in stifled moan ;
 As autumn's widely scatter'd leaves
 Speak of the summer gone ;
 Tell of affection now no more,
 Of plighted faith flown by,
 Like the broken wave upon the shore,
 Or the rack in the evening sky :
 Her sparkling eye is glistening bright,
 Her look is joy, and her step is light.
 Yet, who can tell ?—Within that breast,
 That pure and hallow'd cell
 Of a heart, where grief should never rest,
 Some latent woes may dwell :
 For grief may lurk in the throbbing heart
 That is pure as the mountain stream ;
 And tears from the fount of eyes depart
 That are bright as the morning beam ;
 And the bosom may seem as light as air,
 Yet misery find a dwelling there !
 The maiden sought not the heath'ry brae,
 Love's steps to trace amid the dew ;
 Nor burst through the birchen groves her way
 To the hour of trysting true ;
 The arm of an eilden man sustain'd
 Her feet upon the height ;
 And he smil'd as if her words enchain'd
 His ear with fond delight ;
 He watch'd her steps with a parent's eye,
 And she clung to his side when danger was nigh.
 Onward they trod, like pilgrims twain,
 And often rais'd the eye,
 Where the rugged head of high Binean
 Points tow'ring to the sky ;

Or, where some grey, fantastic rock,
 Parting the leafy screen
 Of weeping birch and gnarled oak,
 Starts forward to be seen ;
 And, dropping lovely o'er its face,
 The wild rose finds a resting place.

The rose perfumes the summer air
 That kisses its buds in passing by :
 It dies ; but the grey rock still is there,
 And other rose-buds charm the eye :
 But the arm that props the tim'rous maid,
 The side to which she clings,
 Shall long in the silent grave be laid,
 While she hails other springs ;
 And finds another arm to guide
 Her steps upon the mountain's side.

The musician heaved a deep sigh. His head which had rested upon his hand during the recital, was now suddenly raised ; for the dog was not only restive, but began to growl, and his master grasped his sword.

“ It is time for us to be off,” whispered the Advocate ; and, as I thought so too, we hastily rejoined our party.

“ What a singular group !” said the Advocate, as he finished his account to the ladies of what we had observed : “ there was both pathos in the music, and feeling in the recitation.”

“ I should like to have heard it,” said Caroline Ashton, looking at her cousin, with an expression which seemed to imply something un-

derstood between them. Mr. Mordaunt said nothing ; but, after the party moved on, he lingered behind, and I saw him climb the rock where we had stood : but he left it immediately, and, on joining us again, he informed the Advocate that he had seen nobody.

“ ‘They will probably come again within the range of our eye,’ said Mr. Oatlands, “ as we ascend. We shall have many resting points, Miss Caroline, and then we can make our observations.”

From the circuitous and steep nature of the path, our progress was slow ; and the Advocate seemed resolved to lead the Cantab into as many dangers as possible, by daring him to follow him. The rest kept the beaten track, still winding among the close scenery of woods and rocks, with now and then an opening, which afforded views of the Trosachs and the lake of the wildest and most romantic character. I was astonished at the intrepidity and perseverance of the ladies, as our path often lay along the ledge of precipices, with scarcely a footing, where the body was supported only by catching hold of the birches and other shrubs which shot out from the face of the rocks : whilst the depth of the intervening hollows, the broken rocks, and the shattered trees ar-

rested in the fissures of the tremendous cliffs, made it truly fearful to look below. At length, emerging from this wilderness of wooded crags, we reached the naked face of the mountain; and, continuing our toilsome ascent, after many a pause, we mastered every difficulty and gained the summit. I believe that we were all disappointed: the wild scenery of the Trosachs, and the extremity of Loch Cateran, which we expected to look down upon, were hidden from our sight; and, like every view from the tops of mountains, the height greatly lessened the interest of the scene. The eye, indeed, ranged over an immense track of rich and beautiful country: the Clyde on one hand, and the Firth on the other, could be traced afar through their winding course, yet, the whole was too map-like to please.

“I told you,” said Mr. Sketchly, addressing himself to the Advocate, “that the view which you painted in such brilliant colours to the ladies, would not recompense the toil: nothing at such an elevation is picturesque.”

“Sketchly!” replied his facetious friend—
 “have you gained the use of your tongue? that unruly member to many, but useless organ to thee, merely to give vent to the peccant humours which thy taciturnity has smouldered

so long : thou shalt be denounced ;” and, climbing up the face of a rock which rose above the spot where the party now rested, he proceeded to execute his threat.

“ At length,” said Mr. Mordaunt, addressing Caroline Ashton, “ you will have a specimen of my eccentric friend’s rhetorical powers.”

He had already ascended about forty feet from the base of the precipice, and advanced to a jutting point, where, fearlessly placing himself erect in the attitude of a graceful orator, with the left arm as if holding the drapery of a gown, and the right stretched out and raised before him, he thus reproved the discontent of his friend the artist.

“ Stand forth, thou disturber of the enjoyments of thy neighbour ; thou cherisher of dis-tempered sensibility and ill-regulated imagination ; thou proselyte to the deceitful suggestions of ambition and vanity ; thou sacrificer of the duties and comforts of life to romantic hopes and expectations ; thou dauber of colours, who dares to fancy that the grand, the magnificent, the sublime of Nature, can be bounded by the limits of thy paltry canvass—stand forth, I say, and let me develope to thy contracted understanding the sources of that enjoyment which this capa-

cious scene inspires ; impress upon thy mind noble and expanded conceptions ; and lead thee beyond the narrow scope of thy feeble genius to the contemplation of the immense and infinite."

At this point of his rhapsody, the Advocate suddenly paused ; and, calling to Mr. Mor-daunt, he directed his eye to the opposite side of the loch. The three men and the dog, whom we had seen at the base of the rock, were observed slowly wending up the mountain, whilst the tallest of them frequently stopped, and seemed to reconnoitre our party through a telescope. At length they disappeared amongst the trees, and we commenced our descent.

We had scarcely arrived within sight of the cove in which we had left the boat, when I observed Dugald advancing to meet me as fast as his lame knee admitted. He put the back of his hand, in true military form, to his forehead, and, coming close up to me, said in a whisper, " may I speak to ye're honour in private ?" As the honest creature's countenance was evidently labouring with something which seemed to oppress him, I fell back from the rest of the party, and begged him to inform me what he had to communicate. He told me that three

persons, one of whom was dressed somewhat like a Spaniard, and whose face he had seen before, but he could not recollect where, had closely questioned him and the boatmen respecting the names of our party.

“ They gat naething out o’ me,” said Dugald, taking off his bonnet, and stroking down his grey locks as he spoke : “ a highlandman, ye’re honour kens, ne’er speaks when he should nae speak : she merely tauld him that she was ye’re honour, Dr. Mc. Alpin’s servant, and wad be proud to carry her commands. She thought she looked astounded when she mentioned ye’re honour’s name, and she speared how lang it was syne ye came to the Hielands ; but she did nae tell her : did she nae do richt, an please ye’re honour ?”

I could not deny my approbation to Dugald.

“ Ye’re honour kens I had nae orders to expose ye’re honour’s movements to any one : and she thought the questions o’er closely pushed ; so she said naething : and then the Spanish shentleman went to the boatman. That man,” said Dugald, again touching his bonnet and speaking in a whisper, “ is nae to be trusted ; she walked aff wi’ the Spaniard in a close confab, and then ferried the hale set o’er the loch, although it was nae her boat, as ye’re honour kens, for the time being.”

I enquired if the boatman had informed him what the Spanish gentleman had said to him.

“ Well a wat—na,” replied Dugald—“ feint a thing wad she say : I dinna fancy her at all.”

Trifling as Dugald’s communication was, it tended to confirm the opinions which the circumstances of yesterday had awakened in my mind ; but, as no farther information could be acquired at this time, I thanked Dugald for his caution and integrity, and joined the party. I intended to cross question the boatman when we landed ; but the moment this was effected, he pushed off, and thus defeated my purpose.

“ She kens whare she is ganging,” said Dugald, giving me a significant look, as he took up the cloaks and proceeded to follow us up the glen.

“ I have a strong desire,” said Mr. Oatlands, “ to discover who this singular musician is : suppose, Doctor ! we come down to the loch towards the close of the evening ; the boatman has informed me that the same music has lately been heard upon the lake at night.”

I agreed to this proposal, and Mr. Mordaunt, having heard it, begged to be admitted to accompany us.

“ We shall be glad of your company,” replied the Advocate, “ provided the ladies can

spare you ;” and, throwing a glance at Caroline Ashton who seemed not to have heard the remark, we proceeded up the glen.

As we passed along, the beautiful birch which covered the face of the rocks attracted the attention of the ladies : the Advocate explained to them the importance of this tree to the Highlander.

“ It is to the Celt,” said he, “ what the cocoa-nut is to the Hindoo : it forms the rafters and the wattled door of his cabin ; his spade, his plough, his cart, his harness ; even his cordage is composed of twisted birch.”

Miss Standard remarked that she was surprised it was not more cultivated than it is in the south.

“ It will grow any where,” replied Mr. Oatlands ; “ but, like the hardy race to which it is so valuable, it loses, when transplanted to a richer soil, that character which distinguishes it on the craggy face of its native mountains.”

Caroline Ashton, who was regarding a beautiful specimen of it, the feathery twigs of which were hanging over the rocks under which the party for a moment halted, remarked that it was a more elegant tree than the hawthorn of the English common.

“ Yes,” said Mr. Mordaunt ; “ but the

hawthorn has an interest from local and peculiar circumstances which the birch does not possess : it is the first tree that we are acquainted with in infancy ; it is the play-fellow of our boyish days ; it is the trysting tree of rustic lovers ; and when, after long absence, we return again to our native village, when all is altered, roads, houses, and other trees are grown out of our knowledge, when no recognized face meets us either to welcome our return or to receive our greeting, the old thorn on the common remains as we left it ; the same twisted and gnarled trunk ; not a branch, scarcely a twig altered ; the same tree we had pictured in memory, the sole survivor of those early joys, the recollection of which had upheld the wanderer amid all his struggles, and at length turned his footsteps homeward, to feel that disappointment amidst which it forms the sole consolation."

In the middle of the glen, the ladies were startled by the sudden appearance of the Spanish hound. The dog stopped for a few seconds, looked at the party, and wagged his tail, on the Advocate calling " Carlo ! Carlo !" We expected to see his master follow him : no person, however, appeared ; but a shrill whistle was soon heard ; when the animal, pricking up

his ears, bounded back in the direction whence he came.

“ I will follow him,” said the Advocate, “ if any two of you will join me ; for three-armed men and a dog are too great odds against one man unarmed.”

“ I will !” said the Cantab, with a readiness creditable to his courage.

“ And I,” added Mr. Mordaunt, “ if Mr. Sketchly will give his arm to Miss Standard.”

“ Nay, that you shall not, Mordaunt !” rejoined the Advocate, who, with his usual tact, had observed a paleness overspread the face of Caroline Ashton, as the Clergyman uttered his intention ; “ your cloth, and the charge of the ladies confided to you and the Doctor, forbid us permitting either of you to do so. No, no !—Sketchly, Percival, and I, shall endeavour to get a sight of this musician.”

As Mr. Mordaunt had evidently observed the change in the countenance of Miss Ashton, he did not stir. I also remained with the ladies, and endeavoured to convince my fair companion that no harm could result, even should the parties meet ; for nothing could occur to rouse any angry feelings on either side.

The attempt to follow the dog, however, proved abortive ; for the animal was quickly

lost among the fern, juniper, and arbutus, which covered the ground : neither his master nor his companions were visible.

“ This flute-player,” said the Advocate, as the three gentlemen returned, “ is a magician : he has the power of making himself invisible ; that whistle was close at hand, and yet not a soul can be seen. I am determined, however,” continued he, “ not only to see, but to speak to him, if he be a mortal. I shall walk down to-night ; and perchance get a glimpse of the musician.”

“ I am equally anxious to encounter him,” said Mr. Mordaunt ; “ I shall, therefore, accompany you, Oatlands, in the evening.”

Neither Miss Standard nor her cousin, although their looks indicated some suspicion of risk in this adventure, said anything to divert the gentlemen from their determination to discover the mysterious being who had excited so much speculation in the party ; and who, it was supposed, was the same person that had alarmed Miss Ashton at Killin.

The fatigue of the ascent, and the lateness of the hour, made dinner most welcome ; the conversation turned upon the three strangers, and especially the apparent Spaniard. The curiosity of the Veteran was roused, and he

resolved to accompany the party to the loch in the evening.

The moon rose majestically ; her full orb, in the dark concave of the unclouded heavens, shed the softest light upon the craggy front of Binean, and tipped with silver and ivory, the summits of every tufted knoll in the glen ; whilst the steep brow of Ben Venue was shrouded in the deepest shadow. I should say, to those who have never been there, that no language can convey an idea of the impression of placid and peaceful serenity, mingled with a sentiment of awe, which the mind receives from the influence of moonlight in the Trosachs. The silence which the party imposed upon itself, broken only by the sound of our footsteps, and the gurgle of the runnels, greatly added to this effect. In the deepest part of the glen, where the road curves around the base of a huge fragment of rock, and is skirted on the other side by a jungle of wood rising upon the base of Ben Venue, a crashing among the bushes halted the party for a moment ; it was, however, only a long-bearded, white goat ; which, alarmed by the uncommon appearance of human visitors in the pass at that hour, burst his way through the thicket ; and, reaching the apex of a rock which towered above

the dark sea of pines amidst which it rose, shewed himself between us and the moon, as if purposely to enhance the picturesque features of the scene. When we reached the loch, all was stillness there: no boat lay in the little creek, which was now obscured in the deepest night by the shadow of the mountain, which, stretching half across the loch, obliterated the outline between the land and the water; whilst a stream of dazzling light, reflected from its unruffled mirror on the north side, served, by contrast, to deepen still more the obscurity of the south. As we slowly walked along the northern shore, and had just gained the summit of a rock which commanded a large expanse of the loch, the notes of the expected flute arrested our attention. The air was one of those soft and amorous sonatas which are often heard floating on the evening breeze over the Lake of Como. The boat, whence it proceeded, with an almost imperceptible movement, the oars being merely dipped in the water, was at this moment gliding across the stream of light. The skill and taste of the musician was of the first order; and, when he concluded, we could distinctly hear the compliments paid to him by those in the boat.

“Donald,” said one of the party, “put this

handkerchief under your oar : I must not lose a note of the airs which the Colonel so kindly favours us with. Let the next, my dear friend, be a Spanish one, full of warmth and pathos."

"Do not ask me for any thing pathetic to-night, my dear fellow," replied the musician ; " my heart is too much oppressed by the reality of grief, to relish its fiction. I have often told you that we are more the creatures of instinct than the pride of reason will permit us to acknowledge. I feel a load upon my breast, which portends no good, and poisons all the moments which I would give to enjoyment: assist me to shake it off, not to nourish it."

"You are a singular compound," rejoined the person addressed. "Who would believe that you are capable of doing what you contemplate!"

"Taunt me not, my friend," again replied the musician ; " your bosom never felt such love as mine has cherished, nor ever knew such grief as has rooted out all its benevolent affections. I owe the world nothing."

"Yet, if you fail, my brave friend! it will charge you with a serious debt."

"Leave the subject, and be hanged to ye!" said the third person ; "'tis time enough to be damned when ye are gone to the infernals, without being first roasted in purgatory."

“ That is a coarse remark,” rejoined the second speaker, “ and deserves no reply.”

“ Reply, or no reply, ’tis nevertheless true. The Colonel knows well what he is about ; and, if Donald can be trusted, failure is out of the question. What say ye, old Charon ?”

“ What for nae trust me ?” was the reply of the well-known boatman. “ ’Tis no a matter o’ law, Mr. Mackenzie ! Do ye opine, sir, that Hielanders are like Edinbro’ writers ?”

“ Ye’re an impudent scoundrel, Donald ! and were ye not wanted for another purpose, I would tumble ye into the loch,” retorted the person addressed by Donald : “ ye’re an impudent scoundrel !”

“ I command both of you,” interposed the musician, “ to be silent !” and immediately he struck up a beautiful, lively, Tyrolese air.

“ I am certain,” whispered the Advocate, “ that I know the voice of the person who spoke to the boatmen. He is a Writer to the Signet, a Solicitor, in Edinburgh ; a coarse, vulgar-minded man, capable of any rascally transaction that can fill his purse.”

“ Speak lower, Oatlands !” said Mr. Mor-daunt ; “ the boat is approaching the shore—the party will land immediately below us.”

The music suddenly ceased ; and the words “ wheest, wheest,” was heard in the subdued

voice of Donald, the boatman, who thus proceeded.

“Trusted, or nae trusted—I’ll shew ye, Mr. Mackenzie, that the word o’ Donald Cameron is as guid as his bond, war it drawn up in ye’re ain office. I see something, howsomever, atween me and the moon, on the top o’ that rock, that says we must nae land there; she’ll stand o’er to the other side:” and in a moment, with a few strokes of the oars, the boat shot across the loch, and was lost in the obscurity of the opposite side; but we heard the oars laid on the seats as the party landed.

“By Gad!” said the Veteran, who, until now, had remained a silent spectator of what was passing, “some mischief is in view; we are a strong body; can we not go and meet the conspirators face to face? We ought to know who the perpetrators of the evil are, should any happen.”

“You forget, my dear Sir!” said the Advocate, “that we must ford the Teith before we can get to them; and, were this not the case, take my word for it, they will not wait our arrival: all that we can do is to extend our enquiries to-morrow, and watch their movements.”

“I believe you are right,” rejoined the

Colonel ; “ and, therefore, let us now return to the inn.”

In my mind, every circumstance that had happened, only involved the matter in deeper mystery. My suspicions of one of the party were still unaltered ; yet, I could not reconcile, with his appearance here, any object that could explain his conduct. The endeavour to account for it in the only way which probability admitted, would not explain his attack upon Miss Ashton ; but, as I was well aware of his libertinism, I dreaded to think upon the consequences, should he succeed in gaining possession of that young lady’s person ; and, consequently, I determined to prevent it, at any risk, even to my personal safety. There was every reason for supposing that the party, which had landed on the opposite side, would recross the lake, in order to proceed up the glen ; and, should I remain near the landing place, there was a chance of the correctness of my conjectures, respecting at least one of the party, being ascertained. I fell back, therefore, unobserved from my companions, and sat down at the base of a rock, which crowns a small elevation, looking directly across the lake ; so that I might be able to observe the boat, as soon as it should be visible, after leaving the opposite shore.

As the moon rose, the broad shadow of the mountain gradually lessened ; but still the outline between its base and the water was indistinct ; and the cliffs and precipices and dark masses of wood and ravines upon its ever-varied acclivity, were involved in the deepest obscurity. By degrees, the voices of my companions died away in the distance, and I found myself alone. The darkness of night was spread only partially over the grandeur of the scene, and its ruggedness elsewhere only smoothed down, but still faintly visible in the hazy softness of the moonlight, so that its spell over the imagination was scarcely weakened. For a short time, my attention was riveted to the spot, completely concealed in the shadow of the mountain, where the boat lay. I listened eagerly to catch the first sounds of the re-embarkation ; but all was silence : so still, indeed, was the air, that the limberest twigs of the birch hung immoveable ; not a leaf turned ; not a breath ruffled the smooth mirror of the loch, glistening in the placid beams which slept upon its bosom. I soon became sensitive to the intensity of the stillness ; the beatings of my heart were audible ; and I held my breath to be assured of the fact. At length, the sublime impression of

awe which fell upon me produced a feeling approaching to that of desolation: the first time in my life a supernatural dread came over me; and I hastily rose to depart. At this moment, the screech of an owl, which flew across the lake, startled me even to trembling; it ceased; and again all was the most profound silence.

I had often heard of the sublimity of excessive silence, but had never before experienced its influence. I had listened, unmoved, to the roar of the cannon in the conflict of armies; to the denouncing rushing of the tropical whirlwind; and to the crash of the thunder peal, amid the startled echoes of the Alps; but the feeling which they impressed was feeble, compared with the overpowering awe with which the dread stillness of this moment unmanned my nerves. 'Twas

“ as the gen’ral pulse
Of life stood still, and nature made a pause*.”

What an inexplicable part of our being is mind! A few minutes before the feeling which I have just described arose, the sole object of my thoughts was the discovery of the mysterious individual who had so strongly excited

* Young.

my curiosity. I had lingered behind my companions to satisfy myself upon this point ; and yet an impression, purely incidental, warming the imagination to poetical sublimity, had awakened such solemn thoughts as obliterated every other sentiment in my mind ; and I hastened to escape from the intensity of my feelings, completely forgetful of the object which had placed me in the situation productive of the dream which had thus passed over me. I was conscious of a feeling which seemed to place me as a spectator of the boundless universe, and which overwhelmed me with the idea of immensity.

As I walked up the glen, with my mind filled with these reflections, I was suddenly roused from the reverie by the halloo of the Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt, who had kindly returned to meet me ; and I was truly glad of their company.

From the conversation which ensued, it was evident that Mr. Mordaunt's suspicions of the person, who had excited so much speculation, were not dissimilar to my own ; but I could not divine how he should be acquainted with that person. Why I did not question him upon the subject is one of those inexplicable points in my character which I have never

been able to explain or to overcome. I have always chosen rather to continue to suspect, or to doubt, and to reason upon the probability of conjectures, than to attempt to verify my notions by a single query. I did not hint my suspicions to Mr. Mordaunt, nor question him respecting his ; and we arrived at the inn as much strangers to each other's thoughts, on a matter so interesting to both, as the first moment when we met.

On entering the little parlour, I found that the ladies had already retired ; the Veteran was lounging, with his limbs stretched out before him, and his eyes turned up to the ceiling, in a meditative mood, finishing a cigar which he was smoking to refresh himself after his evening ramble ; whilst Mr. Sketchly and the Cantab were debating about the probable physiognomy and personal appearance of the mysterious stranger who had displayed so much good taste and skill in his musical performances. The Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt joined the conversation ; but, as I was eager to record my feelings upon the events of the day, and bring up my diary to this point, I took up my candle and retired to my apartment.

Dugald had already placed my writing-table close to the fire, and had wished me " guid

nicht as he retired ;” but he again entered the room, and, coming up to the table, enquired if I wished to be called early in the morning.

“ Why do you enquire, Dugald ?” said I ; for the question was not only unusual, but the manner of asking it, and the expression on the countenance of the good creature, indicated a feeling which he seemed half inclined to explain, if any encouragement were held out to him.

“ If ye want to rest after ye’re lang day’s walk, maybe ye wad hae nae objection that she should gane out ?” Here Dugald paused without finishing the sentence ; and then continued, “ she maun nae say where : but ye’ll no perhaps think it odd should she gang out ?”

“ Not at all, Dugald,” replied I ; “ but why make a mystery of where you are going ?”

The honest creature looked confused : “ she has her thoughts”—was his answer ; and, as if anxious to evade any farther enquiries, he put his hand to his forehead, and left the room.

There was nothing in this transaction calculated to excite surprise ; yet, I could not help, at the moment, reflecting upon the remark of the musician—“ that we are more creatures of instinct than the pride of reason permits us to acknowledge.” The occurrences altogether of the evening seemed to weigh upon my

spirits ; and I could not avoid anticipating, without knowing wherefore, some distressing event. In vain I opened my window, and endeavoured to compose my feelings by looking out upon the face of Nature ; and, after retiring to bed, the dawn of morning fell upon my eyes before the hand of sleep began to press their aching lids, and I sank into repose.

CHAPTER IV.

You turn pale ;
Let me support you :—paler—ho ! some aid there !
Some water !

DOGE OF VENICE.

I WAS astonished and annoyed, on awaking, to find that the day was already far advanced. It was ten o'clock ; and, as Dugald had not come near me, I presumed that the honest creature had not returned. I rung the bell ; and, on enquiry, was informed that he had gone out in the morning with the ladies, who had ordered a boat to be early ready to take them down the loch. The Veteran and Mrs. Standard, I was farther informed, had become anxious on account of their long absence ; and the Advocate, with the other gentlemen, was gone to look after them. The presentiment which I had felt last night again rushed upon my mind : the conviction that some misfortune was about to occur, or had already happened,

was overpowering. I therefore dressed hastily, and hurried down stairs. I found the Veteran, Miss Bridget, and Mrs. Standard, in the little parlour. The old man was walking to and fro, with an anxious, agitated look ; whilst Mrs. Standard was sitting at the breakfast table, leaning her forehead upon her hand, in the same condition of mind as the Colonel ; and Miss Bridget gazing out at the window.

“ Here we are in a most distressing state of suspense, Doctor,” said the Veteran, as I entered : “ the girls went out this morning, at five o’clock, and are not yet returned. By Gad ! women are headstrong to a degree ! Since the attack on Caroline, at Killin, they had my orders never to venture out alone ; yet they are gone, and nobody knows where.”

“ My dear Augustus !” said Miss Bridget, “ they are not alone :—your servant, Doctor, went with them.”

“ A poor, lame, old man !—a very able protector, by Gad !” rejoined the Veteran.

If Dugald is with them,” said I, wishing to comfort Mrs. Standard, “ they are safe enough : I can trust his integrity ; and although old, yet he has the heart of a lion.”

Mrs. Standard raised her head, and seemed consoled with my remark ; but her counte-

nance betrayed the uneasiness of her mind : and, suspecting that my own was as likely to indicate my apprehensions for the safety of the young ladies, I enquired which way the other party had gone ; and, being told that they had proceeded down the Trosachs, I proposed to go in the opposite direction, and immediately left the room.

My conjectures were different from any which probably were entertained either by the Veteran or our other friends. I had no dread of an accident having happened on the water ; as the morning was unusually calm : but my thoughts reverted to the suspicious character of the strangers who had so much excited our attention, and the conversation which I had overheard at the foot of the rock yesterday. My reliance on Dugald, however, was great ; and therefore I had no doubt, if abduction had been attempted, that we should be able to rescue the parties and chastise the miscreants.

I had proceeded only a very short distance along the margin of Loch Achray, on the road to Callander, when I observed a boat nearing the shore, rowed by the Cantab, with Miss Standard in it, supported by Mr. Sketchly. I hastened to the beach, and assisted in handling her from the boat.

“ Oh, Doctor !” she exclaimed, gazing wildly upon me,—“ Caroline is—” But, before she could finish the sentence, she fainted, and I caught her as she fell.

The Cantab now, in a few words, informed me, that, having gone out, with the Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt, to look for the young ladies, he and Sketchly had taken the road along the side of Loch Achray, whilst the two others had proceeded down the Trosachs. “ We had not gone far,” continued he, “ when we observed a female on the opposite side, waving a handkerchief: but, as there was only one, we were doubtful whether it was either of our ladies. We, however, hurried round the upper end of the loch—a most fearful road,—and, having crossed the Teith, where it enters the loch, by a decayed Alpine bridge, formed of little more than two trunks of pine, which scarcely bore our weight over the roaring torrent, we found that the person whom we had descried was really Miss Standard. She ran towards us as we approached ; but no sooner did we meet than she fainted ; and she has continued passing from one fainting fit to another until this moment. We, of course, know nothing of Miss Ashton, nor even of what has occurred : but we saw this boat close to the spot where we discovered Miss

Standard. It was impossible to recross the bridge with one in so helpless a condition as this poor lady. In truth, my dear Doctor, I reflect with amazement that we had courage to cross it ourselves!—it is just where the river issues from among the rocks, which, frowning above, with the frightful torrent below, render it a place sufficient to try any man's courage. I must have both Sketchly's head and my own examined when we get to Edinburgh."

"Never mind either your own head or mine at present," said Mr. Sketchly, who seemed deeply interested in the state of Miss Standard.

"Well," replied the Cantab, "to cut the story short, "we carried her into the boat, and rowed her across, as you have witnessed."

"What is to be done?" said Mr. Sketchly, who was assisting me to support her apparently lifeless body. The Cantab proposed conveying her directly to the inn; but, as the shock to her parents, from seeing her in her present condition, would be most distressing, I suggested the propriety of my preceding them, to prepare the Veteran and Mrs. Standard for the trial which they were destined to undergo. This I performed in the best manner I could. The Veteran hurried to meet his daughter;

and in a few minutes she was laid on the sofa in the parlour; and her mother and Aunt Bridget busied themselves, in applying, under my directions, the proper means for her restoration. It was a considerable time, however, before this was effected; and still longer before the afflicted lady acquired composure sufficient to relate what had occurred. Her recital only tended to overpower Mrs. Standard, who had previously remained wonderfully collected, as long as her exertions were required for the recovery of her daughter. She now sank into a kind of apathetic condition, which the Veteran, afterwards, informed me he dreaded might have ended in the same state of catalepsy which she suffered on the death of her son.

As soon as Miss Standard recovered a sufficient degree of calmness of mind, she gave the following recital of the event which had caused so much consternation and anxiety.

“ You know, my dear father,” said she, “ the custom which Caroline has of speaking to every body: it has gained her many friends; but, in this instance, it has been productive of the misfortune which has fallen upon us. She was fond of chatting with Donald the boatman, and enquiring into all the traditions connected with the surrounding scenery. Last night, before you

and the other gentlemen went down the Tro-sachs, as Caroline and I were walking upon the esplanade together, Donald came up to us, and, taking off his bonnet, began, in his way, to descant on the beauty of many spots along the side of Loch Achray, and told us that the only time to see them to advantage was early in the morning. He concluded by saying that he would row us down the loch any morning at five o'clock, land us at the best points of view, and bring us back before breakfast. 'Ye hae only to tell me the nicht afore, leddies,' said the false man. Caroline, with that haste in deciding which has always been a marked feature in her character, urged me to agree to appoint Donald to have his boat ready this morning, provided the weather was fine. 'How I should like,' said she, 'to astonish the Advocate and our other friends with the account of our expedition, and to prove to them that women are not the helpless beings they imagine! Come, Letty!' the dear girl continued, in her winning manner,—'come now, let us demonstrate our independence.'—Alas!" continued Miss Standard, bursting into tears, and hiding her face in the bosom of her mother, who sat by her on the sofa, supporting her head,—“I shall never again hear that winning voice!"

“ I endeavoured to persuade Caroline that the expedition would not be altogether free from risk, on account of the suspicious characters which were about ; and that she should not forget the alarm which she had suffered at Killin. ‘ Oh,’ replied she, ‘ I was not much alarmed : I could have extricated myself from the old man ! who, after all, intended, perhaps, only to frighten me. I am sure, Letty, that I have courage for any thing : but, for your sake, suppose we take the Doctor’s servant with us ? I received such a high character of him from his master, that I am certain he will be a safe protection to us.’ I hinted that his lameness would render him but a feeble protector. ‘ Not in the least,’ did the dear girl reply ; ‘ the Doctor informs me that he has the heart of a lion : now, therefore, dear Letty ! do say that we may go down the loch to-morrow morning.’

“ You know,” continued Miss Standard, again appealing to her father, “ that I never could deny Carry any thing ; and you know, also, that, with all the delicacy and gentleness of her nature, she never swerved from urging accordance with any object that she had in view, until it was acceded to : and I, at length, in an evil moment, agreed to her proposal. She clung round my neck and kissed me.

‘ You are so kind, Letty !’ said she,—‘ I cannot love you enough ; but if you really think it improper to trust ourselves with Dugald, I will at once give up my wishes to your judgment ; but I do long to see the loch at that early hour.’ You may readily imagine that I would not consent to this proposal. Donald was therefore ordered to be in readiness at five o’clock this morning ; and Dugald consented to accompany us, if his master did not require his services.

“ The morning was beautiful : Caroline and I anticipated the hour : we were on the esplanade before Dugald shewed himself. We found the boat lying in the little creek in front of the inn ; and, in ten minutes afterwards, Donald came down, with a bundle under his arm. ‘ She has got a wheen things for a frien down the loch,’ said the false man, as he tossed the bundle into the boat.

A few children, belonging to the cottages at the back of the inn, were amusing themselves by wading in the water close to the boat. ‘ Gang awa, bairns !’ said Donald ; but their merry faces, their sprightly air, and the little amusing tricks which they were playing off against one another, so much interested Caroline, that she proposed to take two of the little girls into the boat with us ; but Donald objected : we therefore stepped

into it, and were instantly pushed off without them. The boatman seemed anxious that Dugald also should be left behind; but to this I could not consent, and consequently he was admitted into the boat.

“ The soft air of the morning, the gentle gliding of the boat, the beauty and romantic character of the shore, alternately rocky and covered with trees, and the songs of the birds at this early hour, gave a charm to the first part of our progress down the loch which was strongly felt by both of us.

“ ‘ How truly delightful this period of the day is, Letty!’ said my dear cousin; ‘ who would lose the heart-inspiring impulse which it bestows, for an hour or two of sleep? It leads the mind to pour forth its gratitude to the Supreme Author of this magnificent scene, not only for the enjoyment which it bestows, but for the pure sentiment of benevolence and universal love which it inspires!’

“ She had scarcely concluded these remarks, when Donald turned the boat, which he had all along kept close to the shore, into a little cove, where a mountain stream empties itself into the loch, after passing round the base of a mass of rock, rising from a small plat of gravel; and which is half concealed by a mass of trees.

“ ‘ She would shew the leddies a waterfa

here,' said the designing man, and, stepping from the boat, he offered his hand to assist Caroline in landing. Her feet were no sooner on the plat of gravel, however, than he again jumped into the boat and pushed it from the shore. I was so astonished at this movement, that, for a few minutes, I was unable to speak : at length I exclaimed, ' Donald ! what are you about ?—you do not mean to leave my cousin there ?—I insist that you immediately take her again into the boat, or put me also ashore.'

" ' Put back the boat, ye loun, instantly !' said Dugald, seizing one of the oars ; when a scuffle ensued, and the good, honest creature was thrown into the water. Donald immediately pushed farther off from the shore ; and it was now evident that his intention was to separate me from Caroline, who screamed aloud when poor Dugald fell into the water.

" ' I command you, Donald,' said I, ' to put me ashore ! you shall feel the severity of my father's resentment, if you do not, whatever may be your motive for separating me from my cousin.'

" The deceitful wretch only grinned at my remark ; and, in his broken English, assured me that a hair of my head should not be injured.

" ' Turn in the boat, Donald !' I repeated,—

‘at least, to save the drowning man. Have you no compassion?—no mercy?’

“His only reply was, that Loch Achray would not drown a Highlander! By this time I was rejoiced to see poor Dugald rise on the water. Caroline nobly stepped forward into it to lay hold of him: but, conceive my consternation, when, at this moment, I perceived three men rush from behind the rock, and one of them seize Caroline round the waist, and, raising her from the ground, carry her out of sight. My limbs trembled under me; and, if I had not formed a resolution to endeavour, at any risk, to wrest the oar from the hands of Donald, and try to push in the boat, that I might land for her assistance, my energy would have given way, and I should have instantly dropped. Two of the men remained behind, and endeavoured to prevent Dugald, who by this time had regained his legs, from reaching the shore; but the courageous creature, lifting the oar which he had carried over with him, when he tumbled into the water, felled one of them to the ground, and the other ran off. Dugald stepped on the bank, and instantly disappeared; and Donald then pushed in the boat, jumped ashore, and also disappeared behind the rock. I hesitated for an instant what to do; but, my reso-

lution being roused, I stepped out of the boat, over the body of the apparently dead man, and, running round the rock, discovered a path which led to the carriage road on the side of the loch. How can I tell you what met my eyes on getting upon the road?" said the afflicted lady, shading her face with her hands, and sobbing aloud.

"Be composed, my dear Letitia," said the Veteran; "and, for God's sake, proceed!"

"Not far from this path, a carriage and four horses stood upon the road; and into it the man who carried off Caroline was forcing her. The dear girl resisted by every means in her power, whilst Dugald was fixed like a tiger upon the left arm of the man, beating him severely with his free fist. The villain did not seem to feel it: but, the moment Caroline was forced into the carriage, which was accomplished the instant I appeared in sight,—for, holding out her arms towards me, she fainted, and all further resistance was at an end,—he turned round and shook off Dugald as if he had been an infant. The poor old man staggered back for a few paces, then fell, and rolled over the precipice. The noise of his fall, and his groans, will never leave my ears: I fainted, and was insensible to every thing else that passed, until

I found myself near the opposite side of the lake, in the boat with Donald and the person whom Dugald felled with the oar, and who, it seems, was only severely stunned.

“ I again fainted, on finding myself thus situated ; and in this condition I was lifted out of the boat : for, on recovering, I found myself seated on the grass, supported by the person who crossed with me in it. I must do him the justice to say that he behaved with much humanity, and assured me that he deeply lamented the result of the transaction in which he had borne a part ; that it was not the intention of the parties concerned to injure any one ; and that the fate of Dugald, who, he feared, was dangerously hurt, was unpremeditated and purely accidental.

“ ‘ Believe me, madam,’ said he, ‘ however extraordinary the assertion may appear, that your cousin is in no danger of the smallest insult ; the individual, with whom she now is, has more interest in protecting her honour than you imagine.’

“ I beseeched him to inform me who he was, and where he intended to convey Caroline.

“ ‘ On these points,’ he replied, ‘ I am bound to secrecy at present. With regard to yourself, madam, I regret that I cannot conduct

you to your parents. Present appearances are too much against me, to permit me to meet Colonel Standard; for whom, however, I have the highest respect. Your friends will doubtless soon be in search of you; so that I am not afraid of any harm to you in leaving you here alone.'

"I could not reply to this speech. It was followed by the person who uttered it taking off his bonnet—for he was in the Highland dress—and bidding me good morning: he then hastily ascended the hill, in company with Donald, who took the bundle which he had thrown into the boat under his arm, and both were soon out of sight.

"The whole of the events which I have related," continued Miss Standard, "passed so rapidly, that I could not persuade myself that they were not a dream. When left alone, I reflected for a moment what I should do. My first idea was to enter the boat, and endeavour to cross the loch; but my ignorance of its management deterred me from that step. I then walked as far as the frightful Alpine bridge over the Teith; but my courage was not equal to the attempt of its dangerous pathway. I therefore returned to the spot where I was found, and sat down upon the grass to watch

for the appearance of any human being whom I might attract by waving my handkerchief. I think four hours must have elapsed before I perceived Mr. Sketchly and Mr. Percival."

"My poor child!" said Mrs. Standard, "what must have been your thoughts during that time!"

"They were, indeed, my dearest mother, the most afflicting: I was impious enough to blame Providence for having denied to me that foresight which would have enabled me to avert the blow that has fallen upon us, by not complying with the proposition of dear Caroline. I shudder at the thoughts that passed through my mind."

"My dear Letitia!" said the Veteran, wiping away a tear which had started in his eye, "you have no cause to blame yourself. Providence has thrown a veil over every future event of life, undoubtedly for the wisest and the best of purposes. We were perhaps too happy—and too secure of the continuance of that happiness in Carry's affectionate and endearing society. It was well, for our enjoyment of it, that we were ignorant of this impending blow; we could not have relished the blessing as we have done under the foreknowledge of its approaching bereavement. But

this is not the time for moralizing. Doctor!" continued he, addressing me, "what is to be done?"

At no time would I so willingly have evaded a question of this kind as at this moment. My anxiety to ascertain the fate of my sincere although humble friend, and invaluable servant, Dugald, was the object nearest to my heart; yet, the debt of gratitude which I owed to the Veteran, for the numerous kindnesses he had heaped upon me in America, rose in my recollection; and my duty, as well as mine inclination, urged me immediately to join in the pursuit of the miscreant, whoever he was, that had carried off his niece. The imploring look also of Miss Standard's fine countenance, beaming with that divinity of expression which speaks far more than language, informed me that every thing was expected from my co-operation. I was considering for a few moments what reply could be offered to my worthy friend's query, when I was happily relieved from my embarrassment by the entrance of Mr. Mor-daunt and the Advocate, who, in their return up the glen, had met the Cantab, and had been informed of what had happened.

The agitation of the Clergyman amounted to distraction: he would have put a thousand

questions to Miss Standard, had he not been prevented by the tact of the Advocate, who saw the injury that renewing the details of the event would inflict on the deeply wounded feelings of Mrs. Standard. She, indeed, appeared in a condition of mind bordering on despair. For a few seconds she would stare with a vacuity of look in the face of any one near her ; then suddenly rise from her seat ; cross over to the opposite side of the room ; and, leaning her head upon her hands, burst into an agony of tears. The Veteran and his excellent daughter never appeared to more advantage than on this distressing occasion. The old man was wholly engrossed in comforting his wife ; and the personal feelings of Miss Standard seemed to have vanished, the moment she found that her mother's situation demanded all the energies of her mind. Mr. Mordaunt grasped the hands of both the old people in his :—for a moment, as if overpowered by his feelings, he seemed to hesitate ; and then, whilst his words almost choked his utterance, he declared, unreservedly, his affection for Miss Ashton, and his determination to rescue her at the hazard of his life ; and to trace the parties, however subtile and sinister, to whatever part of the world they might carry her. .

“ I can firmly rely,” said he, “ upon the active assistance of my friend Oatlands.”

“ Most certainly,”—replied that excellent man—“ never was it more ready to be tendered than at this moment.”

Miss Standard again looked at me : it was one of those silent appeals which are irresistible ; it almost said—“ you know the feelings of Mr. Mordaunt for my cousin, and you, perhaps, have guessed her sentiments towards him : is it right that he and one, who, however good and kind, is still a stranger to us, should only undertake this rescue ? are you not the friend of my father ?”

I felt the force of this appeal ; and I, of course, offered my services to accompany the other two gentlemen ; but, as I was about to state reasons for my being unable to join them immediately, Mr. Oatlands rang the bell, and ordered horses instantly for Callander.

“ There is no ae horse i’ the stable the now,” replied the female waiter and maid of all work, who, on this occasion, answered the summons of the bell with unusual alacrity ; “ they were a’ ordered in to Callander late last night ; and are no expected hame afore the morn.”

The look of Mr. Mordaunt, at this infor-

mation, was that of utter despair : nor was the countenance of any one present unmarked by astonishment. It was too evident, indeed, that the scheme of the fugitives had been well concerted ; and that every means of immediate pursuit was cut off.

“ Are not my horses there ?” said I.

“ Ou i’, Sir !” again replied Mary ; “ nae doubt yours should be there ; but that’s no the case the now ; for Donald turned them out into the pasture this morning.”

“ Turned them out !” exclaimed the Veteran — “ the conspiracy, indeed, has been well planned ; but, by Gad !” repeating emphatically his oath, “ the scoundrels shall not escape—no ! I will follow them myself to the end of the world ; and think no more of shooting them than if they were dogs.”

The vehemence of the old man roused Mrs. Standard from the lethargy into which she had sunk.

“ My dear Augustus,” said she, regarding him with the most affectionate look, “ you are unequal to such a task : I am sure we may trust to the Doctor and to our good young friend.” And she drew the hand of Mr. Mordaunt, which still held hers, towards her and pressed it to her lips.

“ My dear Mr. Mordaunt !” continued she, “ I have not been an indifferent spectator of the affection which has been awakened in your bosom for my niece, and I know her sentiments towards you : it is to you and to our friend, the Doctor, that we must look to rescue her from the danger which now threatens her.”

The Clergyman kissed the hand of Mrs. Standard, and assured her that he considered it the most sacred duty in which he could be engaged ; and that, with a sincere reliance on the protection of Providence, ever extended to the truly good, and which no doubt would shield Miss Ashton, he had a firm conviction that he should succeed in overtaking the fugitives. The Advocate, who was the most composed person of the party, proposed that some of the peasants should be sent to catch my horses, and that he, Mr. Mordaunt, and myself, should immediately proceed to Callander, where he hoped we should not only obtain some information which might regulate our after pursuit, but also procure fresh horses to aid us in it.

“ If they proceed to Edinburgh,” said he, “ I shall ferret them out from the most obscure corner in which they may shelter themselves :

what do you say to this proposition, Doctor ? let us be off instantly. The Colonel and the ladies, and Sketchly and Percival, can follow us the moment that post horses can be sent for them. We must leave our portmanteaux to their care."

"There is assuredly no time to be lost," said I ; "but, as far as respects my accompanying you, perhaps you have not heard, my dear Sir ! what has happened to my poor servant ; and, if even you have heard of his accident, you cannot be supposed capable of appreciating either the worth of that excellent man, or the deep obligation which I owe to his friendship. I cannot leave this place until I have ascertained his fate : I have already too long delayed this duty :—therefore you must leave me here at present.

"You and Mr. Mordaunt can go forward to Edinburgh ; I shall join you there with the rest of the party ; and then you may command my services for any time, and to whatever distance they may be required. Mr. Sketchly, Mr. Percival, and I, shall walk to the spot where poor Dugald fell, and where perhaps he now lies in severe suffering." In making this remark, I did not perceive any disapprobation

of my plan on the countenance of Miss Standard: and I felt, I know not why, comforted in her acquiescence.

My proposal was no sooner agreed to than it was put in execution: the Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt hastened to prepare for their journey; and, as I was impatient, we left the Veteran and the ladies, and walked along the precipice to which Miss Standard had directed us. It was one of those elevated rocky points, on the high road to Callander, which run along the margin of the loch, and which rise from thirty to forty feet above the water. As we approached the spot, I recognized it as one which, on my ride to Stewart's Inn, had struck me as dangerous, from the road being cut close to the brink of the precipice, and the traveller being unprotected by any fence. I had looked at it with some interest; but little thought how soon my attention would be again drawn to it, and how fatal it was likely to prove to the humble friend who then cautioned me not to trust my horse so near its edge. If we had had no other means of recognizing it, the moans of poor Dugald would have been sufficient. He lay half in the water which washed the base of the rock, and was evidently so

much hurt as to be incapable of moving. His groans were heart-rending, and were mingled with the expressions, “ och !—my dear master !” long before the warm-hearted creature was sensible that we were so near him. It was with some difficulty that we descended to the spot where he lay. On first seeing us, a gleam of joy spread over his countenance ; and he stretched out the only hand which he could move towards me.

“ My dear master !” exclaimed the kind-hearted creature, “ she is now contented.”

“ Tell me, Dugald !” said I, “ where you are chiefly hurt ? where is your pain ? I know all that has occurred :—it is for your safety, only, that I am now interested.”

“ Weel, weel,” replied he, suppressing with much effort the expression of his agony, “ that is eneugh : it will soon be o’er ; but she is now happy.”

“ But say, Dugald !” I again urged, “ where are *you* hurt ?”

“ Troth, every where : there’s no a bane o’ my body that does nae aik ; but ye need nae fret about it ; she is an auld, feckless man ; she has naebody, except ye’re honour, wha cares a strae for her : she has gat what she wished

for, to die afore ye're honour ; and hae her e'en closed by ye're hand. Och—on !” and he groaned deeply—“ but she is now happy.”

It was necessary that he should instantly be moved, as the powers of life were apparently sinking : still I had hopes that the natural vigour of his constitution would sustain him, severe as were the contusions which he had suffered. With much difficulty, we carried him along the side of the lake for a short distance, and placed him on the plat of gravel where Miss Ashton had landed. For a moment, he breathed with greater ease ; then looking wistfully in my face, and pressing my hand with a kind of convulsive grasp with one hand, whilst he pulled me forcibly by the coat with the other, he fetched a deep sigh, and again looked as if he wished to detail what had happened ; the words hung upon his lips, which moved, but he spoke not ; he fell back in my arms—gave two or three convulsive sobs—followed by a lengthened audible expiration—and all was still. I thought he had fainted, and hastily requested the Cantab to bring some water to sprinkle over his face. It was useless : the tide of life had ebbed, never to flow again : not a pulse was felt at the wrist, nor a flutter at the heart :—one convulsive sob alone was again audible—

—and all connection of the noble spirit of my humble, but affectionate friend, with this living world, ceased for ever. It is unnecessary—it is impossible—to describe what I felt on this occasion.

The remains of Dugald rest in the south-west corner of the church-yard at Callander: the Veteran, Mr. Sketchly, and the Cantab, accompanied me to the funeral: there were no prayers read—it is not the fashion of the country; but, when the last piece of turf was placed over the mould, when the finishing blow of the spade was given to it, and, as is usual in the north, the hats of the mourners were lifted in silence, I could command myself no longer: the body which we had just committed to the ground was to me as that of a brother: all that poor Dugald had done for me—his self-denial—his kindness—his unceasing, affectionate attention—all rushed upon my memory: I burst into tears and sobbed like a boy. I am not ashamed to pen the sentence. I loved Dugald as a brother; and if there is, as I firmly believe, “a certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life,” such disinterested goodness, struggling without a murmur with the inflictions of poverty and the pangs of bodily suffering, must rise to receive that re-

ward which we are told has been prepared for the blessed from the beginning of the world.

I was kindly led from the grave by the Veteran, who, whilst he knew too well the human heart to meddle with my grief, or to utter a word of consolation, brushed a tear from his cheek, and conducted me to my apartment in the inn.

He had no sooner left the room, than I threw myself upon my bed and gave a free vent to my sorrow ; but sleep, the sweetest balm to the wretched (I had not closed my eyes since the death of Dugald), soon overcame me ; and I remained unconscious, until roused by the hand of the Veteran kindly pressed upon mine. I almost involuntarily rose, and allowed myself to be led by him to the dinner table, where his excellent wife and daughter, with Mr. Sketchly, and the Cantab, were already seated.

Before leaving Callander, I fulfilled my intention, and saw an eglantine planted on the grave of Dugald. I had now performed the last services of affection to the best of men, the most disinterested of friends ; and may that emblem of his virtues never be dismembered by the destructive hands of idleness, nor

rooted up by the command of cold-hearted utilitarianism !

On the following morning, the whole party left Callander. The Veteran had received a letter from Mr. Mordaunt, announcing the arrival of himself and his companion in the Scottish metropolis ; but lamenting the fruitless issue of their enquiries respecting the fugitives, whom they had been able to trace only as far as Stirling. It further mentioned, that, judging from his knowledge of the present state of feeling of all the party that a quiet residence would be preferred to an hotel, he had secured apartments for the family and myself in Sutherland's lodging, where he and Mr. Mordaunt would be waiting to receive us on our arrival. Having nothing to detain us in Callander, we set off on the morning of the day after that of the funeral of poor Dugald, with the intention of reaching Edinburgh that evening.

Neither the Scottish horses nor the Scotch postillions are accustomed to consider time of importance to travellers ; so that the twilight was far advanced before we reached the " guid town." We were, indeed, not sensible that we were entering it until we found ourselves passing under the shadow of the Castle. In gazing,

as we drove along Princes Street, upon the dark mass of that stupendous bulwark, and the dusky buildings ranging along the brow of the declivity which descends from it to the eastward, with a light here and there twinkling in some high window, as if to mark more forcibly the dread elevation of the houses, I could scarcely believe that I had so lately left the city, or that the singular adventure, which had so hastened my return, was other than a dream.

Miss Standard, who travelled in the same carriage with the Veteran, Mrs. Standard, and myself, had avoided, during the journey, making the most distant allusion to her cousin ; and had anxiously endeavoured to divert the mind of her mother from dwelling upon the afflicting circumstance which hurried us onward. The strong impression, however, which the half-obscured ruin of the Castle and the Old Town, now made upon her mind, completely threw her off her guard.

“ How different,” said she, “ is the present aspect of this singular scene from that which it wore the last evening that we walked in Princes Street ! It was a fine summer evening : the street was a gay and animated promenade, and poor Caroline in the highest spirits. Do you not recollect, Papa, that a gentleman turned

round and gazed after her for some minutes ? and, so extraordinary, Doctor !” said she, “ are coincidences, that that very individual afterwards accidentally met and joined our party in the Highlands, in the person of Mr. Mordaunt.”

Mrs. Standard smiled upon her daughter ; but sighed deeply ; and I could plainly perceive that the Veteran was desirous the subject should be dropped. I made no reply ; and the carriage, in a few minutes afterwards, stopped in Herriot Row. Mr. Sketchly and the Cantab had arrived before us, and had dropped Miss Bridget at Sutherland’s ; and she now beckoned to us from the window ; where she was with the Advocate and Mr. Mordaunt, who, in a moment, were at the door of the carriage. The greeting was that of real, if not old, friends : the Advocate looked cheerful and happy ; but traces of the deepest anxiety were imprinted on the countenance of Mr. Mordaunt ; and it was equally apparent that his health was suffering under it. The details of their journey were soon told. They had traced the fugitives as far as Stirling, where, however, instead of changing horses, they stopped only for a few minutes : no person left the carriage, the windows of which were kept up, and nothing was mentioned by the postillions. From

this time every trace of them was lost ; but, from the information which the Advocate had given to the police, and the well-known activity of its officers, there was every reason for hoping that some satisfactory intelligence might soon be obtained.

“ I have been informed,” said the Advocate, “ that Mackenzie, the lawyer, who I thought, from his voice, was one of the party in the boat on Loch Cateran, has been for some months on the continent ; but this I suspect to be a falsehood. Nothing is more evident than that the whole transaction has been well planned, and every precaution adopted, both to secure the secrecy of the inferior conspirators, and the flight of those who are the chief perpetrators of the crime.”

This intelligence, and this opinion of the Advocate, was any thing but a source of comfort to the party. The Advocate, however, expressed his determination to leave no means untried to gain that information which could alone lead to the restoration of Miss Ashton ; and Mr. Mordaunt felt some consolation, in having not only the advice of his friend, but the aid of his personal efforts, for that purpose.

“ Were I not,” said the Advocate, “ in momentary expectation of that intelligence which

must direct our pursuit, I should insist on the whole party dining with me to-morrow, at a small house which I have, about five miles from town, a kind of *rendezvous de chasse*, to use the mongrel language of fashionable life, among the hills."

Both the Veteran and Mrs. Standard expressed their thanks for the politeness of the kind-hearted lawyer ; but they assured him that, if even time permitted them to accept his hospitable offer, their minds were too much engrossed with the fate of their niece to admit of any enjoyment. He acknowledged the propriety of these sentiments ; and, with a proper consideration for the fatigue of the travellers, he and Mr. Mordaunt left the house.

After the Colonel and the ladies retired, I also took up my candle and sought my solitary apartment. I employ that epithet although, in fact, my room was not more solitary than it had always been ; but it certainly felt more so than usual on this occasion. I felt the absence of poor Dugald there, busy-ing himself with a variety of things, which he conceived to be necessary to my comfort.— I missed the good fire blazing, instead of the choked-up spark, in the grate, the sight of which, on my entrance, now made me shiver—

and I also missed my candles, ready-lighted—and my diary opened upon my table. I had, in the attention which these comforts required, a demonstration that some one cared for me; and this of itself warded off any feeling of desolation which might have intruded: so true is it that we never know the real value of what we possess, nor sufficiently prize the services of a friend, however humble, until we lose him.

Having put the poker into the expiring embers, and sat down to watch the effect, my mind naturally rested upon the striking confirmation of the adage which my own case presented. I saw, as Hamlet would have said, “in my mind’s eye,” the kind-hearted Celt pacing my room with as much softness of step as the halt of his lame knee permitted; then kneeling down beside me, and gently raising my foot upon his lap to undo the straps of my trowsers, and take off my shoe to replace it with a comfortably toasted slipper: I saw him airing my dressing gown, and patiently waiting, until I took off my coat, and silently slipped my arms into its sleeves; and, ere he uttered his “guid nicht,” I fancied that I beheld him casting his eyes around to be certain that every thing was in order; then snuffing my candles;

and, touching his forehead with the back of his hand, gliding out of the room.

How often are the senses deluded by the phantasms of the imagination ! How fondly do we yield to the deception, and almost regret to be undeceived ! My mind was in this condition, strongly impressed with the irreparable loss of my lamented servant, when I heard the room door gently opened ; and, on turning round, I literally beheld Dugald standing with it ajar in his hand. He gazed steadfastly upon me : I essayed to speak, but my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth, and utterance was refused ; still I struggled for speech :—it was in vain :—and, in my efforts to obtain it, having coughed violently, on afterwards raising my eye to the door, to my astonishment and disappointment, it was shut, and no person was in the room. So convinced, however, was I of the reality of what I had seen, that I called “ come in,” and waited for a few seconds, almost expecting to see Dugald enter ; but, at length, memory resumed her influence, and I became conscious that the whole was a mere delusion of an over-excited brain.

What an opportunity would this incident offer to the superstitious to propagate error ; to

the sceptic to illustrate his favourite maxim of the illusory nature of all things, or to the philosopher to cogitate upon the influence of mental as well as physical agency upon the nerves! thought I, as I rubbed my eyes to be convinced that I was awake. I was setting myself to work out the explanation, when the room door was again opened; but, instead of poor Dugald, Mr. Mordaunt entered. For a few moments, I gazed at the Clergyman, as if uncertain whether his appearance was real, or whether it was not another illusion of the fancy; but, on his addressing me, the matter was instantly settled.

“ I rejoice, Doctor!” said he, “ that you are not yet in bed, for I wish you to accompany me to the house of Mr. Oatlands, who has sent to inform me that he has discovered the haunt of Donald the boatman, who is in Edinburgh; and he is desirous that you and I should accompany him and two police officers to the place where the miscreant is lodged.”

“ I will do so most willingly,” replied I: and, having drawn on the boots from which I had, only five minutes before, uncased my limbs, I accompanied the Clergyman to Saint Andrew’s Square, where we found the Advocate and Mr. Sketchly waiting for us. I was

soon satisfied of the accuracy of the information which had been obtained respecting the retreat of Donald. The police officers informed us that the Highlander was amply supplied with money, which he was lavishly spending in treating several of his countrymen, and others, who were settled as porters in the city ; and, through the perfidy of one of these friends, the discovery was made upon which we were now about to act. It still, however, remained doubtful whether Donald, who was so subordinate an agent in the plot, knew where the principal actors had fled, or how to direct our pursuit. It was, nevertheless, the only probable channel open to us : it was, therefore, necessary to investigate it ; and, with that intention, we followed the officers who were to guide us to the house.

CHAPTER V.

Charles—Did you see them ?

Officer— ————— As clear as I see you :
Three blacker-hearted knaves, in evil hour,
Did never danger league for desperate deeds.

MSS. DRAMA.

“ STAY,” said the Advocate, as we were about to enter a dark, narrow passage, in the turn of the west Bow ; “ do look at that house, over which the moon is just rising, and throwing the whole into a deep shadow ; that was the dwelling of the celebrated wizard Major Weir. I recollect the time when I dared not approach it at this hour.”

“ It is almost a ruin,” said I ; “ and the other houses are little better.”

“ Yes,” replied the Advocate ; “ and they will soon be levelled, to make room for some contemplated improvement. I cannot help lamenting it: there is something in early associations which makes me even opposed to useful changes : in my time, he was a bold and

intrepid urchin who could climb ten steps of that scale stair*.”

I was preparing a remark on the antiquity of the houses, when I perceived the impatience of Mr. Mordaunt strongly marked upon his countenance, as he turned round to me, and the light of a lamp on the opposite side of the narrow street gleamed full upon his anxious face.

“ Let us enter, therefore,” said I : and the whole party followed the police-men into the narrow passage.

We were guided along it solely by the sides of the passage, which was pitch dark ; but, after two turnings, we suddenly emerged into the moonlight, and found ourselves at the summit of several flights of steps which led down, in the open air, to the Cowgate, the backs of the houses on the north side of which were now before us. It was a singular scene of half-ruined masses of ancient tenements, which, at one time, had been the habitations of the aristocracy of the Scottish capital, but were now let out, chiefly in single apartments, to the lowest class of the community. We paused for a few minutes on the platform, at the top

* Spiral staircase.

of these stairs, to contemplate the scene, and to concert further measures of precaution for preventing surprise, and the flight of those we were in search of, as the police-men assured us that there were numerous avenues of escape if the slightest intimation of our approach was given. It was agreed that one of our legal guides should remain upon the platform, to be prepared to give his assistance if necessary, and that the other should conduct us to Donald's apartment. We now ascended twenty or thirty broken steps of a winding staircase, and then proceeded along a kind of gallery, into which the moon shone through open arches, and enabled us to guard against stumbling in the holes which time had worn in the floor. Occupied as my mind was with the object which had led us in this singular place, I could not avoid gazing at the old sculptured, Saxon pillars which supported these arches, and which clearly demonstrated not only the antiquity of the tenement, but the aristocracy of its character in former days. We again ascended ten or twelve steps, and entered another dark passage. At the farther end of which was a door, and through some crevices in it the light of a candle streamed ; whilst it was evident, that the persons in the room to which it led were carousing. We stopped to

listen. The language of the carousers, the loudness of their voices, and the symptoms of discord that reigned, left no hesitation in our minds that, although Donald might be one of the party, yet, that none of the chief actors in the late conspiracy were present. Indeed, in a few minutes, we recognized the voice of the boatman in the following dialogue :

“ Tak your glass, my frien, and dinna fash your thumb about any risk to hersel ; Donald Cameron kens weel what she is about. Tak your glass, ye ken weel there’s nae lawing : that’s better than tabling down the pence ; is no that your opinion ?

“ An is it that you are after thinking of ? ” retorted the person addressed, in a strong Irish accent ; “ maybe you wad wish to be tould that Patrick O’Reilly values your tret as little as a whiff of our grandmother’s pipe ! Ye know, Donald Cameron, that I could clep you up in the Heart of Mid Lothian, or even hang you, were I nat a man of a tinder conscience ! ”

“ Speak nae o’ conscience in my presence, Patrick ! ’tis a burning shame to hear sic a word blasphemed in your mouth ! ” exclaimed a third speaker, whose drawling voice indicated him to be a west-countryman.

“ My faith ! that comes ill frae you, Peter ;

I opine there's little conscience among the hale o' us! or we wad nae be now carousing with the unhaly gains of Donald: but let sic nonsense alane, and I'll gie ye a sang."

This was spoken evidently by a female, who followed up her remark with the following verse of one of Burns' songs, sung with a degree of taste that astonished our party:

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An fill it in a silver tassie,
That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie.

"What did Mackenzie gi'e you, Donald, for this last turn?" said the third speaker, interrupting the song. "By my faith! he is as thorough a pad scoundrel as ere kept his neck out o' a tether, yet he wad think naething o' clapping an honest man into the Tolbooth on bare suspicion."

"Never was a juster sentence passed!" whispered the Advocate; "yet the scoundrel who has uttered it is the informer in the present instance,—as sanctified a looking knave as ever pestered society. We shall now, I hope, have a confession."

"What's that to you?" was the reply of

the cautious Donald. "She gat what she asked, and that's eneugh."

"We'll see ye swing for it yet, frae the west end," uttered the female again; "ye're a dour brute, that could look in sic a face as that leddy's, and hurt a hair o' her head, for a' the writers and colonels in the warld."

"Ye're a bonnie lass yoursel, May Macmurdo!" rejoined the third speaker.

"Hands off, Jock Douglas!" exclaimed the female. "I say he is a heartless brute! If I kenn'd where the leddy's friens are, I wad get him laid up by the heels."

Mr. Mordaunt pushed forward towards the door, as if eager to proclaim himself, and those with him ready to receive the information thus proffered; but the Advocate restrained him.

"Be patient, my excellent friend!" whispered he; "your impetuosity will spoil every thing."

The voice of Donald was again heard in reply.

"Wad ye like cauld iron in ye're guts, May? Maybe ye're tired o' life? do ye want me to draw this gulley across ye're craig? She's no soon provoked; but, when her birse is ance up, she's the very deevil in h—ll."

“ Its aw a piece of stuff,” said the sanctified speaker again ; “ she wad only do so for the love o’ lucre ; and there’s nane here to pay her.”

The Advocate grasped more firmly the arm of Mr. Mordaunt, as he stood beside him ; for he felt that he was again ready to spring forwards, and he even heard his heart beating audibly.

“ Jock Douglas,” rejoined the female, “ ye judge eithers by y’ersel : I dinna cant and screw my mouth, and turn up the white o’ my e’e, at kirk, like a seceder, as ye do ; and then peach an hang ye’re friens, like anither Iscariot, —ye base, hypocritical loon !”

“ Keep a better tongue in ye’re head, May, my jewel !” said O’Reilly : “ I’m after thinking that ye’re little better here than a laverock in the hawk’s e’e.”

“ I have nae fear o’ either Jock or Donald,” replied the dauntless female ; “ there’s ane that I ken wad soon spit them baith, war they to touch me. I hate hypocrites !—an the blackguard wha, far twa or three guineas, could pit into the hands o’ that ruffian Mackensie and that Colonel — what’s his name ?—sae beautifu’ an innocent a creature as I saw step into the chaise at the Black Bull, will ne’er

cheat the gallows:—I could tuck up the beast mysel."

"'Tak' ye that, ye d—d she deevil!" was uttered by Donald; and a blow was evidently given; for the words were almost instantly followed by a piercing shriek, and the noise of the overturning of chairs and tables, the breaking of glasses, and the rush of feet.

'This was the moment for our entrance: the police-man therefore burst open the door, and exposed the boatman, collared by his two companions, and the female, prostrate on the floor, bleeding profusely. 'The struggling of the Highlander, whose face was purple with rage, and the efforts of the other miscreants to prevent him from again attacking the wounded woman with a knife, which he grasped in his hand, so engrossed for a moment their entire attention, that our entrance was not perceived.

With the aid of Mr. Mordaunt, I raised the woman, who had been rather stunned by the blow than seriously hurt; for the knife had only divided a few small vessels on the temple, the head having been protected by the thick black hair, which her fall had loosened from the comb that held it up, and which now veiled her face. On placing her in a chair, and

sprinkling some water over her, she opened her eyes—looked round wildly—and, uttering another piercing shriek, went into a violent hysteric. In the mean time, with the aid of the other police-man, who had found his way into the room on hearing the noise, the boatman and his companions were separated, and, after the most desperate resistance, all three were secured and handcuffed.

The sanctified miscreant, who had been the means of leading to their apprehension, pleaded his services with the Advocate as a cause for setting him at liberty; but Mr. Oatlands informed him that his testimony would be necessary in the Police Court, where he would now have the pleasure of escorting him; after which, if the magistrate thought proper, he should be set at liberty. The appearance of Donald, on finding himself thus in the power of the friends of Miss Ashton, may be more readily conceived than described. O'Reilly declared that he knew nothing of the abduction; that he had met May Macmurdo, who asked him to accompany her to the lodging of a friend of her father from the north, “who had got some of the blunt left him by a dere relation, and was going to give a ploy.” He protested that he was “as

innocent of the knowledge of Donald's guilt as the unborn babe."

"Upon what plea, then, Mr. O'Reilly," said the Advocate, "could you have imprisoned, or even hanged, your worthy companion?"

"Faith, Mr. Oatlands,"—for the ruffian had been a client of the Advocate, and recognized him,—“ye even now, truly, press me too hard: but ye're honour knows that a man is moulded by his comrades; and it needs no great clerkship to guess that a chum of sanctified Peter—honest man!—must be in fair training for the gallows. Ye're honour—may Heaven bless you!—got me out of one scrape, and I expect ye will now let me go home to my childer.”

"Your hopes, Mr. O'Reilly!" replied the Advocate, "will not be fulfilled in the present instance: you know more of Donald than you admit, and we cannot spare so valuable a witness."

Donald now began to perceive that all chance of escape was at an end; especially as the Advocate, on examining the female, who had recovered, had procured from her the fact, that a lady, answering the description of Miss Ashton, had departed from the Black Bull Inn,

in company with a gentleman and a female servant, two days before ; and that the boatman had informed her that the young lady was the person he had assisted in carrying off from Stewart's Inn.

“ May be, Sir,” said the cunning miscreant, throwing off the sullen, dark look which he had worn since his capture, and addressing Mr. Mordaunt, “ ye wad nae be agen hearing something o’ the young leddy here, rather than in the police-office ? Do ye nae think that we cou’d speak mair freely here than in the court ? is that no ye’re opinion ?”

Mr. Mordaunt looked at the Advocate, as if to illicit his sentiments on this proposition.”

“ Yes,” replied the lawyer ; “ if we can trust the ruffian. On every account it would be better, as we might be detained by the forms of the court ; and, if the information be such as we can depend upon, we should not lose a moment in the pursuit.”

“ Ye say richt,” rejoined Donald, with consummate impudence ; “ they’re far eneuch awa wham ye seek ; and I opine ye’ve no time to lose : do ye nae think it better to tak her deposition anent them matters without delay ? Is that no ye’re opinion, Sir ?”

The insolence, and the cool impudence of

the scoundrel, made us hesitate as to the propriety of liberating him on his confession ; but the urgency of time left us no choice. The Advocate, therefore, informed him that every thing depended on the truth of his information ; and that, although he should be now liberated, yet, that the police would not lose sight of him, and punishment should certainly overtake him, if we discovered that he had deceived us.

“ Nae doubt, Sir, nae doubt ; naething can be mair just. She has, howsomever, repented, and wad be glad to mak a clear conscience ; it’s a sair thing to be fashed wi’ a load o’ sin : do ye nae think sae, Sir ?”

“ Now is the moment to throw it off, Donald,” said the Advocate ; “ and, therefore, tell us all you know about this iniquitous transaction.”

“ A weel, Sir, she’ll be upon honour ; but ye dinna think she can speak wi’ thae manicles on ? Wad it nae be out o’ nature to expect the tongue to be unshackled when the rest o’ the members are in bondage ? Ye need nae fear, when thae twa harpies o’ the police are in the room, either for ye’re sels or for May, though she awes her a grudge.”

“ Any thing to secure the information we so eagerly desire,” said Mr. Mordaunt.

'The Advocate, therefore, ordered Donald to be unfettered, and to proceed with his narrative.

It was a scene for the pencil of Wilkie. The apartment was large, and displayed, in the wretchedness of its present condition, the remains of its original grandeur ; the black oak panelling which covered the walls, broken and falling to pieces, exhibited, in various places, the remnants of masterly carving, which was more than equalled by the flowered ornaments on the roof, even now nearly entire, although obscured by smoke and dust. The ample chimney still boasted its marble moulded jambs, its Dutch tiles, and its elevated, grotesquely figured, mantle-shelf, which ill accorded with the wretchedness of the furniture ; namely, four crippled chairs, and the table that had been overturned in the scuffle, with a truckle bed in the corner. On the panelling between the windows, which were four with thirty panes in each, hung a miserably coloured engraving of the Pretender, and another of John, Duke of Argyle ; and over the mantle-shelf, was a broken looking-glass behind the candle, which threw its light upon the party below. 'The group consisted of the miscreants, O'Reilly and sanctified Peter, with a police-man close to each, and Donald in his

Highland garb, a little in advance of them, confronted by the Advocate, who stood with his hand upon the back of a chair, with all the dignity which his miniature person could assume, rendered still more diminutive when compared with the athletic boatman, whose categories he was receiving. Near him, on the floor, sat the female, May Macmurdo, her forehead resting on her right hand, veiled by her long, black, dishevelled hair ; and supported by Mr. Sketchly, whose kind heart never failed to impel him to offer his assistance to any woman in distress, whatever might be her failings or unworthiness. I was seated on a chair near him, deeply interested with the appearance of Mr. Mordaunt, who stood, leaning with one arm upon the mantle-shelf, seeming as if he could look into the very heart of Donald, and eager to seize every sentence he uttered, whilst the varying expression of his countenance betrayed each feeling that was passing through his anxious mind. The two pyramidal groups, which had been thus unconsciously formed, were rendered more picturesque by the light being thrown from above, and the soft, deep shadows which mingled with the general obscurity of the apartment.

“ Weel,” said Donald, “ it wad aiblains be

best to begin frae the beginning : is that nae ye're idea o' the thing, Sir ?”

“ No more of your interrogatories, Donald !” said the Advocate ; “ but inform us simply what you know of the plot to carry off Miss Ashton, and what part you played in it, however diabolical : you know the terms on which you are to speak the truth.”

“ Perfectly, Sir, perfectly,” replied Donald ; “ but, as for ony thing diabolical, there is little doubt that the leddy is now muckle obliged to me, for she was hinging on the Colonel's arm, without a tear in her ee, and stapped into the carriage, wi' her servant lass and the Colonel, at the Black Bull, as if naething had happened.”

Mr. Mordaunt's countenance fell, and he advanced a step towards Donald and uttered the monosyllable “ how ?”—but immediately checked himself, and resumed his former position.

“ She is sure,” continued Donald, “ the Colonel is a kind man ; and hersel has cause to say, a free-handed man, for he gave her a guinea o'er an aboon what he had bargained for : was nae that eneuch to mak her speak weel o' him ?”

“ Who do you speak of ?” said the Advocate.

“ Wha does she speak o’ ?” repeated Donald, looking up with affected surprise, “ wha should it be, but Colonel Manvers.”

“ Manvers ?” said I, believing that I had heard wrong.

“ Manvers ?” exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, knitting his brows, and gazing inquisitively at the boatman.

“ Manvers ! did you say ?” enquired Mr. Oatlands.

“ Just so,” replied Donald ; “ an a bra looking man is she, though a wee bit o’er auld for so young a leddy. Do ye nae think there is a propriety in a parity o’ years, as the minister says ? but ye ken weel, Mr. Mordaunt,” turning his eye upon the Clergyman, “ that matches are made in heaven.”

Mr. Mordaunt looked thoughtful ; and the Advocate reminded Donald to forbear his comments, and proceed with his narrative.

“ Weel,” continued the boatman, “ ye see, she met the Colonel, and anither gentleman, and that foul-mouthed writer, Mackenzie, wha every body kens : nae doubt ye ken him weel, Mr. Oatlands, though he is no o’ your set ? Weel, as she was saying, she met them in the glen about three days afore the leddy gaed awa.

“ ‘ Boatman !’ said Mackenzie, ‘ its a

cheerfu' and a profitable life yours in the simmer, but little to brag o' in the winter: wad ye nae like to better yoursel ?'

" ' Nae doubt,' said she ; ' we a' like to rise i' the world.'

" ' Weel,' said Mackenzie, ' we may help ye on. Ken ye ought about the auld Colonel and his family up at Stewart's ?'

" ' That she does,' said she ; ' he's a decent man, and has twa nice lasses, a dochter and a niece ; as for his wife, I've ne'er cast een upon *her*.'

" ' Do they often come down to the loch ?' said Mackenzie.

" ' Now and then,' said she, ' wi' some youngers wha are travelling wi' them.' "

" Be more brief, Donald !" said the Advocate ; " we do not desire all these details."

" Weel, weel, Sir ! her tale is soon tald. Ye see, after twa or three meetings, he let me into the secret o' the plot to carry off Miss Ashton, and engaged me to wheedle her some morning into my boat on Loch Achray. She need nae say mair on that head : ye ken what happened. Colonel Manvers" (at this name Mr. Mordaunt again advanced towards Donald, and stood gazing earnestly at him, with his arms folded upon his breast) " aye—in troth—he promised her ten guineas for the job, and she

has got it, and a guinea mair since she cam to Edinburgh. I opine, Sir, ye're now satisfied : is that no true ?”

“ Not at all, Donald,” said the Advocate ; “ you must inform us what you know of this Colonel Manvers ? what he did after his arrival in town ? and where he is gone to ?”

“ Stap, stap, Sir !” replied the insolent ruffian ; ye're no i' the court o' session wi' your gown on, an your twa-tailed wig. Ye canna say that she bargained to stand a cross-examination.”

“ Donald ! you are an incorrigible rascal,” said the Advocate, coolly ; “ but recollect that we have a pair of mufflers here ; and you know the consequence of contumacy.”

“ Just gie her breath, Sir ; ye ask'd if she kens ony thing o' Colonel Manvers : how should she ? But, gif ye weel take hearsay evidence, she heard that he cam frae England, somewhere about a place they ca' Rochdale.”

Mr. Mordaunt breathed short, and turned pale ; but, instantly recovering himself, he desired Donald to mention again the name of the place whence Colonel Manvers came ; which was instantly done.

“ It is enough,” he said ; and, sitting down upon a chair, he threw his arm over the back of it, and rested his forehead upon his hand.

The Advocate looked for an instant at his friend ; and, observing that something had affected him, he hurried the examination of Donald, and endeavoured to bring him at once to the point ; namely, where Colonel Manvers had gone to. It was evident, from Donald's replies, that the fugitives had set off for London two days ago ; and that, whatever might be the cause of so extraordinary a circumstance, there did not appear to have existed any opposition on the part of Miss Ashton. This information, with the additional fact that she had a maid with her, involved the whole affair in deeper mystery than ever. We looked at one another ; and it was apparent, from the surprise displayed in the countenance of each, that we were all anxious to communicate our ideas ; but this was not the place to do so : it was, therefore, proposed by the Advocate to leave the prisoners in the custody of the police-officers until the morning, when they should be set at liberty.

“ You may thank your stars, Donald,” continued the Advocate, “ that you have escaped the punishment which you richly deserve. Return to Loch Cateran, and ply your boat in an honest way.”

“ Hout ! hout ! ” exclaimed Donald ; “ giv it be a' the same to ye, Sir ? she wad rather

be hangit than gane back to the loch. Na! na! she means to set up a chair, in the guid town, if she can get an odd man to tak a lift wi' her."

"As for you, O'Reilly!" continued the Advocate, "your former good deeds are not forgotten by me: take care of your conduct; a man may escape once; but—"

"An, by my soul! I know what you are after saying, so you need not speke it; ye're not the only Advocate who has bamboozled a jury and witnesses; but Patrick O'Reilly never was accused of ingratitude: as to being here, was it not that jewel of a cretur, May Macmurdo, that enticed me?"

"Marry her, O'Reilly, and let both of you reform," replied the Advocate.

"I wad walk a mile over hot ploughshares any day to oblige ye're honour," said O'Reilly; "but I can't favour your present recommendation, were ye're honour a prest insted of a lawyer. Look ye—I have all my life had some fond cretur forcing me to follow her steps insted of my own: devil a soul of my own, or a heart either, have I been able to keep among the dear jewels—good luck to them! but, sweet creturs as they are, Patrick O'Reilly has always been his own maister. May, my darling! ye're

a jewel of a cretur ; but I have nae desire to be maistered by any woman ; nor scoulded here—and scoulded there—and have the house in a blaze—the moment I endulge in a bit of a spree.”

We were leaving the room, and the hopeful party to the care of the officers, when sanctified Peter stopped the Advocate, and put the following questions to him.

“ May I speer, Mr. Oatlands, if there be any law again intercommunication ? I opine there is a wee whaup o’ the rape here ; an that it might stan an action for false imprisonment.”

The Advocate did not reply ; and we left the question to be settled between the officers and the sanctified knave who put it. Mr. Mor-daunt seemed to linger as if he wished to question Donald farther ; but the Advocate put his arm in his, and piloted us safely into the open air, where we all again felt that we could breathe easily, and were glad to be freed from any farther trouble with such miscreants. As we walked down the High Street, the clock of St. Giles’ chimed three ; but it was a heavenly night, and the effect of moonlight, on the high, antiquated buildings of this part of the town, would, on any other occasion, have forcibly arrested our attention. Little was said by any of

us, except a passing remark on the extraordinary lives of the class of the community of which the specimen we had just parted from was so striking an example.

When we arrived at Princes Street—
 “Oatlands !” said Mr. Mordaunt — “the whole of the information you have elicited from Donald, you may readily imagine, has not tended to set my mind at ease. In the first place, the willingness of Miss Ashton to proceed, confirmed by the circumstance of her having a maid with her, is most inexplicable ; and still more so is the fact that Colonel Manvers is the person who has carried her off. I am truly wretched ; and must continue so until my mind is satisfied that either both pieces of information are false, or that I have been deceived in my opinion of Miss Ashton ; the bare idea of which is misery.”

“Be patient, my dear friend,” replied the Advocate ; “harbour no suspicions in your mind derogatory to Miss Ashton, who, notwithstanding the shortness of my acquaintance with her, is, I will pledge my existence, incapable of any thing sinister. With respect to Colonel Manvers, I can say nothing.”

“I never saw him,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “though his brother is my warmest friend. I

have heard that his libertine habits had given great uneasiness, both to the Earl his father, and to my friend ; but one thing induces me to think that there is some mistake, as his age does not accord with that of the individual we are in search of."

"The person," rejoined the Advocate, "which the Doctor and I saw, at the foot of the rock, was at least sixty."

"He could not be less, Mr. Mordaunt," said I ; "but conjectures, calculated merely to make you more miserable than you are, would be worse than useless. There is much villainy at all times afloat in the world : the name of Manvers may be assumed ; and, as to the disposition of Miss Ashton, we can place little reliance on the observations of such people as Donald. Cease then to perplex and entangle yourself in a maze of fruitless imaginings."

Mr. Mordaunt admitted that my arguments were correct ; nevertheless, feelings, such as he then experienced, were not easily kept down ; but he trusted in Providence that the issue would be more felicitous than the feeble foresight of any of us could at that moment anticipate.

As we were now at the door of Sutherland's, we parted with the determination of concerting in

the morning what measures were next to be pursued. Mr. Mordaunt went home with the kind-hearted Sketchly, and the Advocate departed to his own house in Saint Andrew's Square.

Although I retired to bed, yet it was vain to expect sleep. I felt keenly for Mr. Mordaunt ; probably, if the cause had been sifted, the more keenly, from some fancied similarity between his present condition and my own ; when one, on whose affection I had the deepest claims, had renounced my heart for that of a rival whose sole superiority was wealth and title. There is, in truth, a mixture of selfishness even in our sympathies ; and perhaps the opinion is not wholly untenable that we feel for others, only when we place ourselves, in thought, in the disastrous circumstances which raises our compassion for them. The object of all my solicitude, of all my miseries, had been long dead to me, as she was now to the world ; but, had she lived, no reproaches of mine would have ever discomposed her pillow : she had inflicted a wound on my heart which time could never heal ; but, if it was the will of Heaven to permit such an affliction, never should I have allowed selfish feelings to add one pang to the many which, I am certain, wrung the bosom of

the frail being who implanted the seeds of never-dying wretchedness in mine. The bitterness of the cup of which I had partaken had passed away ; but the memory of it still occasionally recurs ; and, in spite of all my philosophy, turns the stream of misery of the past into the channel of the present. I sympathize with Mordaunt from the inmost recesses of my heart, and I shall sacrifice time and fortune to discover and punish the author of his grief.

In the morning, the worthy Veteran and his family were informed of the occurrences of the night ; and it was agreed that Mr. Mordaunt, the Advocate, and I, should immediately proceed to London, and that the family should follow at a more easy rate of travelling. If the information which we expected to obtain in the metropolis should lead us to leave it before the arrival of the Veteran, it was also agreed that he should wait there for our dispatches, to direct his future progress. These preliminaries being settled, and having bade adieu to the family, and received an affectionate farewell from the kind-hearted Sketchly and the Cantab, we drove off from Sutherland's at four o'clock in the afternoon.

CHAPTER VI.

Lear. No ; I will be the pattern of all patience ;
I will say nothing.


WHEN the carriage, in which we left Edinburgh, had reached the heights above Arniston, the Advocate, who was an enthusiast in every thing connected with his romantic town, requested Mr. Mordaunt to look back upon the scene which we had passed, and say if he had ever seen any thing to surpass it. The Clergyman complied with his friend's request, but said nothing : his mind was evidently wholly absorbed by one object, and could admit no other, however pleasurable in itself, to displace it. The view of the Scotch Capital was at this time, indeed, one which, under other circumstances, would have powerfully arrested his attention. The intervening country, which is of the richest and most varied description, hill and dale, mountain and valley, was

softened down by the period of the day ; the town was seen rising, in the far distance, amidst an amphitheatre of hills, like a mass of dusky towers, faintly shrouded in the haze of advancing evening, and the Frith, stretching like a magnificent lake behind it, reflecting from its surface the sidelong rays of the declining sun. In the foreground, the woods which crowned the elevated spot, over which we were passing, were beginning to display the russet tints of autumn ; the fields every where were ready for the sickle ; in some, the reapers were busy ; in others, the shocks were even now standing ; and the whole landscape presented, in its richness, variety, and romantic features, a feast for the eye of taste of the most attractive character. Mr. Mordaunt looked at it and smiled ; but he was not in a humour for any enjoyment.

As he settled in the corner of the carriage, and the Advocate fell asleep, I employed myself in attempting to read what was passing in his mind, and to obtain another proof of the correctness of my theory of looks. I fancied that I could descry the evidence of a struggle in his mind between his wounded feelings, his affection, and his principles. He knew that, as it was his duty to teach resignation, it was equally his duty to practise it. I imagined

that it was not so much the abduction of Miss Ashton, and the danger to which it exposed her, which weighed down his spirits, as the ideas which the remarks of Donald had raised respecting the state of her feelings. His religious principles would have enabled him to triumph over the grief into which any account of her sufferings, or even of her death, would have plunged him ; but the most distant idea that she could have been a willing fugitive, that she felt happy in her present condition, or that any act approaching to deceit could taint a mind which he had regarded as only less than that of an angel's in its purity, brought with it a weight of suffering which he could not withstand.

It was impossible not to perceive, from the dejected look of the worthy Clergyman, his downcast eye, his almost suspended respiration, and the half-stifled sigh which every now and then escaped from his bosom, that his thoughts were wholly absorbed with the past ; and that he was reviewing every circumstance, however trivial, which had occurred since he had joined the party of the Veteran, which could cast the smallest gleam of light upon the sentiments of Miss Ashton. Affairs of no moment became important, and indicated feelings on the part of the young lady, which he was surprised had



made little or no impression at the time. Could his reflections have been displayed before me, I believe that the same conclusions would have followed the examination, which the countenance of my fellow traveller now led me to form. The fainting of Miss Ashton, when the mysterious person, whose presence at the lake had excited so much speculation, appeared suddenly amongst the trees, he now, at one moment, attributed to a consciousness that she knew who it was, and was aware of the object of his visit; whilst, at the next, he despised himself for believing that such a degree of duplicity could for an instant stain the purity of the object of his adoration. So singular are the vacillations of the feelings torn by doubt and conjecture—so closely allied is the heavenly sentiment of love to the fiend-like torment of jealousy in the breast of man! The natural cast of melancholy in the character of Mr. Mor-daunt was, indeed, likely to foster such heart-sickenig, erring cogitations, which may truly be described as the offspring “of insatiate love.”

It was night when we entered the little town of Melrose; and, although the moon was rising majestically, and not a cloud perceptible in the heavens, yet much of the interest of

our drive along the banks of the Tweed had been lost by the lateness of the hour.

“What a glorious night!” said the Advocate, rousing himself and rubbing his eyes, “what an opportunity for a walk to the ruins of the Abbey at midnight! Come, Mordaunt! cheer up. I know that you have never seen Melrose at that witching hour, so gloriously described by Sir Walter. You shall enjoy a feast to-night.”

Mr. Mordaunt smiled; but, instead of replying, he asked if it were possible that we could proceed a couple of stages farther?

“Possible enough, my dear fellow! but for what purpose?” was the Advocate’s answer. “If Donald’s information that the fugitives left Edinburgh two days ago be correct, no night travelling will enable us to overtake them before they reach the metropolis; wherefore, then, fatigue ourselves to a degree which will cripple exertion when we arrive there?”

I agreed with the Advocate, partly because the chance of overtaking the fugitives was hopeless;—partly because I hoped that so striking an object as the ruins of Melrose Abbey would, for a short time at least, tend to lessen the weight of anxiety, which was so ob-

viously wearing down both the bodily and the mental powers of the worthy Clergyman.

After having taken tea and muffled ourselves in our cloaks, we proceeded to the ruins of the Abbey, as the clock struck eleven.

The Verger, at whose door we knocked to gain admission to the interior of the ruin, was also the Sexton. Conceiving, no doubt, that his occupation was one which required that the radical moisture, as well as the radical heat, should be duly maintained, he daily moistened his clay so assiduously, that he was never visible to strangers, at so late an hour as we demanded his services. His daughter, therefore, an active maiden of twenty-three or four, supplied his place on these occasions. She apologized for the old man, by saying that he was indisposed ; and, with a lamp in one hand and a large key in the other, she led the way into the Abbey.

“ It is a capital nicht, gentlemen, for seeing a’ the beauties of the ruin,” said she, as she turned the key in the door, and ushered us into that part of the building which is still employed as a parish church. We passed hastily through it ; and, entering the antient chancel, experienced that admiration which is felt by every one who has gazed upon its fallen grandeur.

The moon, which poured its soft light upon the broken arches, and threw the shadow of the magnificent window across the rooted-up pavement, now strewn with the fragments of the stone roof, brought into the most beautiful relief the rich tracery of the sculptured ornaments, contrasted with their shadows, producing the effect, to borrow a metaphor, of silver chasings upon a ground of ebony*.

“That is the tomb o’ Michael Scott, out o’ which the licht cam, that Sir Walter has described in his Lay o’ the Last Minstrel. That stane—ye see there—was lifted by William o’ Deloraine: ye’ll recollect that Sir Walter says:

‘The toil-drops fell from his brows like rain.

‘It was by dint of passing strength

‘That he moved the massive stone at length.’

It wad be lang ere ony man now living could move it. And that marble stane,” continued our communicative conductress,” is the tomb o’ the King; and that is the tomb o’ the first Abbot: and just stand here, sir,” said the damsel, addressing Mr. Mordaunt, “and look through thae arches, and ye’ll acknowledge ye have never seen any ruin like it. I wish the sweet,

* Scott.

young lady I showed through the Abbey, by day-light, twa days ago, were here now, to admire that sight. She had mair taste than anybody I ever shewed it to afore. Aye, and she was very pretty, and looked sae waefu; and, in truth, the tears started into her ee, as she sate on that very stane, and listened to a story I told her o' a young couple wha lately cam to see the ruin at nicht; an' the lady fell ill, and died at the inn."

Mr. Mordaunt gazed at the young woman as she spoke; then looked significantly at Mr. Oatlands, who enquired if any one accompanied the lady.

"Yes," replied she, "I'se warrant it was her father or her uncle,—a comely, gude-looking, tall man, like an officer, only he was not dressed like an army man."

"Have you any idea where they were going?" said the Advocate.

"Na, sir! I never speir where folks come frae, nor where they are going. Bless you, sir, there are often thirty or forty persons in a day visiting the ruin: there would be no end of it."

"Did you hear the name of the lady?"

"Her christian name?—I heard the auld gentleman call her—Caroline."

Mr. Mordaunt advanced a few steps towards the speaker ; then, as if recollecting himself, he sat down upon the stone, which is called the Abbot's tomb, and seemed to sink into a kind of reverie. Mr. Oatlands and myself followed our talkative Cicerone over the rest of the building, examined the cloisters, the remains of the refectory, the gallery which runs round the wall of the choir, and other details. On returning, we found our friend seated where we had left him. Our approaching steps roused him from the dreamy state in which he was absorbed ; and, starting up, a transient flush, as if ashamed of having displayed so openly his feelings, spread over his countenance ; and, addressing our conductress, he enquired so minutely into every circumstance connected with the appearance and the conduct of the old gentleman and his youthful companion, that the girl stared at him for a few seconds ; and then said—" May be, sir, ye're a brother o' that lady ? I canna aver that she looked either weel or happy ; but, oh ! she was sae pretty ! sic a delicate form ! sic rich, shining, auburn hair ! and een that, I'm sure, were never made for sorrow ; yet she did look the most melancholy young lady I've seen for mony a day !"

Mr. Mordaunt stood like a statue during

this recital, deeply absorbed in thought. It was evident that a variety of conjectures had been awakened in his mind, by the girl's description of the person in whose power the object of his solicitude still remained. It was natural that he should be perplexed in reconciling to himself by what fascinations a person who, from every account, was of an age more like that of a father than of a lover, could fetter the mind of a young, high-spirited female, so as to paralyze every effort which might be attempted to escape from the thralldom ; for he could not admit the idea that her detention could be otherwise than coercive. The remarks of Mrs. Standard had induced him to cherish the idea that the attachment which he felt for Caroline Ashton was reciprocal ; yet his mind vacillated between hope and doubt--between security and disappointment ; and his anguish was in the proportion of the doubt which involved the event. Reflections which, in spite of himself, arose in his mind respecting the possibility of insincerity on the part of Miss Ashton, were not the least of the mental tortures which consumed him, and almost made him feel that it would be happiness to be relieved of life. Indeed, he sometimes experienced a fearful desire impres-

sing his mind, against which, the soundness of his principles alone, and the obligations which he owed to his Creator, protected him. The intense feelings, however, which were passing in the mind of our friend were, too evidently, displayed in his appearance to be mistaken either by Mr. Oatlands or myself. I was shocked as I gazed upon his pale, dejected countenance and his sunken eye; and was reflecting how soon the insignia of grief are depicted upon the physiognomy, and considering which of the bodily organs the sedative influence of the depressing passions most powerfully affected, when the Advocate proposed that he and Mr. Mordaunt should return to the inn, and leave me to enjoy that view of the ruins from the churchyard, "which," said he, "in such a night as this cannot be equalled."

"Come, Mordaunt!" continued Mr. Oatlands; "you can neither see nor relish the sublime beauties of the Abbey to-night: I must be your Cicerone on some other occasion: let us retrace our steps to the inn, and leave the Doctor to satisfy his curiosity with the view of the great window from without."

Our conductress opened a little wicket door, at one end of the transept, through which the party passed into the churchyard; and,

having waited until my friends were out of sight, and heard the key harshly turned in the gate of the Abbey, I slowly walked to the spot in front of the great window, which Mr. Oatlands had pointed out as the proper place to view the ruins most advantageously by moonlight.

For a few minutes my attention was so wholly absorbed by the magnificent aspect of the sacred edifice, its unequalled window, its broken buttresses, its shattered pinnacles, mellowed and softened in the broad stream of subdued light which fell from the full orb of the moon, that I was unconscious of the peculiarity of my position, until the hour of midnight sounded from the clock-tower awakened my attention to it. I was leaning, surrounded by graves, upon one of those tabular monuments which are seen in almost every country churchyard. It was also that solemn hour when the spirits of the dead were supposed, in the days of superstition, to visit the mouldering remains of their former mortal tenements. Whose remains swelled the little hillock on which I stood it was impossible to conjecture. The antient edifice which had beheld many a proud and lofty spirit laid low, in that narrow bed which levels all humanity, however luxuriantly they may have budded and flourished in their sea-

son, was silent. In truth, it was of little moment. The dust of the scornful abbot and the bashful peasant had, long since, mingled together: the aspiring ambition of the one, the grasp of his capacities, his genius, the power of his acquirements, his rank, honours, and authority,—the monotonous, servile life of the other, his contented ignorance, confiding credulity, and rude but unsophisticated affections—had been equally arrested by that awful mandate which dissolves in a moment the mysterious union between soul and body—the immortal spirit and its mortal tenement—in this scene of its sojournment. The deepest silence, unbroken save by the muffled muttering of the Tweed, chafing in the shallows of its pebbly channel, brooded over the scene. It was such a moment as a contemplative man would select, to yield up the reins to his imagination, and

‘ ————— uncontrolled, as in a dream,

‘ To muse upon the course of human things*.’

I gave full scope to my fancy, and allowed both the minutes and the river to glide on unheeded, although the incidents which crowded upon my mental eye were, many of them, gloomy enough :—affections unreturned, friend-

* Southey.

ships misplaced, hopes blasted, and the whole of life's path a dreary waste, the retrospect of which was misery and pain.

Memory, what art thou? By what spell dost thou summon the past into the present? by what power awakest thou those who have long slept in the dread silence of the tomb, remoulding them as they were and breathing into them life and animation? How inadequate are the attempts of philosophers to reduce thy wonderful power to the laws of association! How still more futile to regard it as depending on a property of the brain, which enables it to retain vestiges of former ideas, until, like a worn-out inscription on a tablet renewed by the chisel, they are again brightened up by the influence of volition! "There seems," says Mr. Locke, "a constant decay of all our ideas, even of those that are struck deepest. The pictures drawn in our mind are laid in fading colours. Whether the temper of the brain makes this difference, that in some it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others like free-stone, and in others little better than in sand, I shall not enquire." It would be useless, thought I, turning the question in my mind—it would be useless to enquire. It is enough for me that to memory I am indebted for

the few pleasures that have soothed the dreary moments of my erratic life—the happy, thoughtless days of childhood—the endearments of maternal care—home, that paradise to youth of ease and comfort—all were tasted by me only to rekindle the imagination when far, far distant from their source. But, if I owe some gratitude to Memory on that account, to it also are due the most poignant sensations which have assailed my bosom in my mortal pilgrimage. Such were my cogitations as the magician again tried her skill, and brought before me one upon whose faults—I can scarcely pen the phrase—the portals of death have long since closed. I stood again in the room to which I had been summoned to pronounce the word—forgive—to sooth the fast-fading moments of her whom I had loved from infancy, whose vows of fidelity were pledged to me when I left my paternal roof, to seek, by honourable exertions, that independence which was only desired to be shared with her; but who, forgetting all that she had felt and sworn, had opened her ear to flattery;—her eye to the splendour of rank and title, and gave her hand to one, who, not possessing her heart, by harshness and neglect after her marriage, brought her to an early grave. I stood by the sofa where she

lay; her blanched but yet beautiful face shaded by the dark, clustering ringlets which fell in profusion around it; a slight flush and a sweet, subdued smile overspread her countenance as she raised her eyes towards me, and, extending her hand to take mine, said—"Can you forgive me?" The reply—"I do, Amelia, from the bottom of my heart"—was again upon my lips, when the whole picture vanished in an instant. The ruined Abbey, the tabular monument on which I was leaning, the surrounding trees, the moon in the vault of the heavens shedding her placid light upon every object, were once more obvious to my eye, and, penetrating the silence, the muttering of the river again fell upon my ear. I was meditating on the causes which had recalled the scene which I have just described, when my attention was arrested by a quick, light step near me: and, turning round, I observed a female, wrapped in a mantle, rapidly tracing the gravel walk which leads from the parsonage-house, through the churchyard, to the street. The appearance of a lady (for her figure, gait, and dress evidently indicated her station), alone, at such an hour, even supposing that she had come from the Parsonage, astonished me. I almost involuntarily followed; but, ere I reached

the street, the figure had disappeared ; and as death-like a silence as I had left in the precincts of the Abbey reigned in the High Street of Melrose. I walked slowly down to the inn. The waiter, who had been watching my return, lighted me to my bed-room ; and, having placed a candle upon my table, he withdrew. I threw myself upon the bed, to reflect for a few minutes upon the incident which had hastened my return ; but, not being able to come to any satisfactory conclusion respecting it, I rose, and, as is my custom on such occasions, I opened the window and looked out upon the night.

The moon, which illuminated the side of the street on which the inn stood, threw a deep shadow over the opposite houses ; in one of which, however, a light appeared. There were neither curtains nor blinds to the window, to obstruct the view of the interior of the room, in which I observed a lady seated at a table, with a pair of candles, a small travelling desk, and some books, before her. She was supporting her forehead upon her hand, as if reflecting upon the contents of a book which she was evidently reading ; but, on raising her head, and shaking back the curls from her face, my astonishment was intense on perceiving that it was no other person than Caroline Ashton.

She began to read again, and continued to do so for a few minutes ; then closed the volume, and applied her handkerchief to her eyes. In the agitation of the moment, I unconsciously exclaimed aloud, "Miss Ashton !" The sound apparently reached her ear ; for she started up, looked hurriedly around, seemed to listen for a few seconds, then placed the book in the desk, snuffed out one of the candles, took up the other, and quitted the apartment.

My first impulse was to arouse my fellow travellers and communicate to them what I had just observed ; but I knew not their apartments, and every person in the inn was in bed. Reflecting, also, that no advantage could be taken of the discovery at this late hour, I determined to wait until morning, and then to inform Mordaunt and Oatlands of what I had observed, and to concert with them measures for obtaining an interview with Miss Ashton.

In vain I tried to sleep—the occurrences of the evening kept possession of my thoughts. The singular position in which Mr. Mordaunt was placed had not before particularly struck me. It was true that Caroline Ashton had been carried off by stratagem—it was apparently as true that she had made no effort to throw off her bondage, if it was really

such ; and, therefore, it was questionable how far we were authorized to make any attempt to rescue her. I had never, for an instant, doubted that a sincere attachment existed between Mr. Mordaunt and Miss Ashton. I knew, even, that she had made a disclosure of her sentiments to her Aunt ; and that these were favorable to the wishes of the Clergyman ; yet, in any other affairs than those of love, it might have been reasonably enquired, how could this happen ? They had known each other far too short a time to appreciate character ; and the image of the object of a prior attachment was still cradled in the heart of Mr. Mordaunt, when he first met Miss Ashton. But there is no reasoning upon matters of love, whether they are directed by chance, as some, or by necessity, as others, suppose. If Mr. Mordaunt had never previously felt the tender passion, it would not have been wonderful that he should be smitten by such beauty and attractions as Providence had bestowed on Caroline Ashton, and should fall in love as suddenly as occasionally happens. Even with the image of another still vivid in his imagination, to plunge again into such an ocean of contingency, and get beyond his depth—or, farther, to become so entangled as to place both his

health and his life in jeopardy, in attempting to counteract the event which had separated him from the object of this second attachment, was not inexplicable. Like other wounded parts, the heart which has been once perforated by the blind archer is more exposed and more yielding to future attacks. The mental telescope through which the victim gazes, also, obscures the past in dense and most oblivious mists, whilst it gilds the future with the brightest sunshine, and spreads over it that enchantment which distance always lends to the view. So far the condition of Mr. Mordaunt's heart could be readily accounted for; but why Caroline Ashton, with all the loveliness and innocence of youth, with a natural high and forward spirit, a deeply cultivated mind, with refinement, and the most delicate simplicity, could be inveigled and so fascinated by the addresses of a man old enough to be her father, as to proceed willingly with him, defied explanation. Had there been opportunity for casting the snares which often entrap woman, however well judging and discerning in other respects, to listen to overtures which, on any other subject, she would spurn, the solution of the mystery, involving the submission of Miss Ashton to the individual

who had carried her off, might have been solved. The selfishness of the sex too often renders a woman credulous—blind—and chains her ear to the most incongruous addresses: the gilding of fortune, the splendour of rank, the incense of flattery, throw a halo around the suitor who is a fool, or a dotard; the disqualifications of the man, in intellect or in moral worth; great disparity of age; even with another and more suitable object moving within the orbit of her affection; all give place; they become as a grain of sand in the balance, if the selfishness of the female bosom is to decide whether love or the advantages of rank and fortune shall prevail, when both are placed in competition. But no such opportunity had been opened to the individual in question; he had no means of clouding the understanding, or blinding the discernment, or chilling the natural affections of Caroline Ashton. How then was her conduct to be accounted for? A thousand explanatory conjectures might be hazarded, and not one to the point: it could not be decided by the most attentive consideration of the event in all its bearings; I therefore relinquished the attempt in despair, cherishing the expectation of having some part of the mystery resolved on the following morning,

by obtaining, if possible, an interview with the lady herself.

The best resolutions are often frustrated. It was my intention to be astir as early as possible, in order to communicate my discovery to my friends, and devise means to procure an interview with Miss Ashton. I was, however, still in bed, in an imperfect slumber—a half-dreaming state,—for the sun had already risen high, and had shot his beams through my curtains,—when Boots tapped at the door of my apartment and announced that “breakfast was ready, and that the other gentlemen were waiting.” I was shocked at the intelligence, and, finishing my toilette with unusual alacrity, I hurried into the breakfast room.

The effect of my communication upon Mr. Mordaunt may be readily conceived. It was determined that we should instantly proceed to the lodging on the opposite side of the street:—in two minutes we were at the door. After knocking violently three times with the hand, for there was no knocker, a raw, awkward-looking servant girl appeared, and demanded what we wanted.

“Is Mr. —, Mr. —, — eh !” said the Advocate, expecting to illicit the name of the lodger from the girl, “is Mr. — at home ?”

“ What’s ye’re wull ?” asked the girl, with a look of suspicion, evidently excited by the earnestness which was conspicuously displayed on the face of each of us.

“ I mean, my dear !” again demanded the Advocate, endeavouring to remove suspicion by pouring honied words in the ear of the bare-footed Venus—“ I mean Mr. —— ; you know—the old gentleman, who with a young lady has been living here for three days past ; is he at home ?”

“ Did you want to see him, Sur ?” enquired the damsel, in the true, national interrogatory style.

“ Yes, my dear !” rejoined the Advocate ; “ either the old gentleman or the young lady.”

“ Weel, you see, Sir !” said she, still holding the door only half ajar, and blocking up the opening with her person, “ that canna be, as they baith gaid aff this morning at five o’clock !”

“ You don’t mean to say so ?” exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, laying his hand on the arm of the girl.

“ Do ye really think I wad tell a lie about naithing, and get naithing for it either ?—Na ! na ! Sir ! ye dinna ken me. Maybe ye hae some particular business wi’ the gentleman ?

what a pity ye could nae have come yestreen!" We looked at one another as much as to say, what is to be done? The gawky damsel had discernment enough to perceive our dilemma, and chimed in the consolatory remark—

“Aweel, Sirs, it canna be helpit.”

“Tell me, my good girl!” rejoined the Advocate, slipping a sovereign into her hand as he spoke—“what was the name of the gentleman?”

“Faix! that taks telling,” responded the damsel; “and I ken whan to speak and whan to haud my tongue: ye’ve got a’ out o’ me that ye wull get—so gude morn.”

She proceeded to shut the door; but the Advocate, resisting her effort, enquired if she knew where the parties were gone?

The girl, after eying him with a most significant leer, burst into a loud laugh, and replied—“I ken nae mair than this door whare they are gain; and if I ken’d, I wad nae tell you. I opine by a’ this,” looking at the sovereign, “ye intend nae gude to the honest man;” and, in saying this, she slapped the door in our faces.

It was evident that the girl had been largely bribed to secrecy; and as evident that we could gain nothing more by farther parlance;

we therefore returned to the inn, and, having determined to pursue our original course, we ordered the horses, breakfasted, and, in a few minutes afterwards, were on our road to York.

Although the Advocate bantered me on the profoundness of my slumbers, yet, Mr. Mor-daunt remained silent ; his thoughts were otherwise engaged. He felt the conviction almost forced upon him that Caroline Ashton was a willing victim, if that term could be applied to her at all ; that no escape from her thralldom had been attempted ; that compulsion was not even requisite to retain her with the companion of her flight. As these ideas passed through his mind, he meditated on the propriety of withdrawing his pretensions to the affections of Miss Ashton—he had no right to control them. It was true that he had displayed sufficiently his preference for her, to have made her fully aware of his intentions, and his advances had not been repelled ; but he had made no formal declaration of his sentiments ; and he only heard incidentally from Mrs. Standard an assurance that they were reciprocal—intelligence which the wishes of his heart had, in his present opinion, led him too hastily to credit. He almost argued himself into the belief that the preference which Miss

Ashton had shewn for his society, the blushes which suffused her radiant countenance when her eye met his, the devotion with which she seemed to receive every opinion which he advanced, might be referred to that artificial politeness now so generally cultivated, and which veils so completely the genuine feelings of the heart, as to render it nearly impossible to separate truth from fiction, in intercourse with the more refined portion of womankind. He recalled to mind the events of the last evening they had met—he could not think that he was not mistaken in supposing that the sincerity with which his heart worshiped the idol of his devotion, would still be rewarded. He could not forego the hope that he was not to be again snatched from happiness, and doomed to dwell only in memory upon blessings too pure and hallowed for him to enjoy. He could not harbour the idea that duplicity could dwell in the bosom of Caroline Ashton; he even blushed inwardly that his mind for a moment should be open to such a thought. Perplexed with conjectures, tormented with doubts, crushed in spirit, but still unchanged in the ardour of his affection; feeling at one moment despair entering his heart; at another, hope prophetically lifting his eye to a brighter future, breaking the clouds

of his despair, but not sufficient to rouse him, nor to subdue the despondency which had settled upon his soul. Although the Advocate and I guessed what was passing in his thoughts, and the former had long regarded his friend as an incorrigible enthusiast, yet we judged it most advisable neither to interfere, nor to attempt to disturb the train of his reflections, but to proceed as rapidly in our journey as possible.

We passed, unnoticed, the romantic magnificence of the castle and cathedral of Durham, regardless of the tomb of the venerable Bede ; stopped only to change horses at York ; and, like the Flying Dutchman, left Doncaster, Grantham, and Stamford behind us disregarded. Our progress indeed was as rapid as four horses, guided by postillions paid in the ratio of the velocity of their driving, could convey us : we saw nothing of the fugitives ; and, late in the evening of the second day, the red glare, reflected from the sky, which at night betokens from afar the approach to the great metropolis, the emporium of the world, spread before us.

With that freedom which the Editor has already taken in altering the arrangement of the matter in the Journal of his deceased friend,

he shall here leave the travellers, and carry the reader back to the party who were waiting with anxiety in the Scotch metropolis for letters from the Doctor and his companions, which were to regulate their future movements.

CHAPTER VII.

“ The home, where thoughtless and serene,
 My heart slept peaceful as an inland lake :
 Though few my wants, pure joys were ever round me.”

SCHILLER.

TIME passed heavily with the party at Cameron's, although the kind-hearted artist exerted himself to lighten the load of anxiety which oppressed the spirits of all, whilst the fate of Caroline Ashton was yet involved in mystery. In conducting them over the romantic scenery around the Scottish metropolis, it was evident that Mr. Sketchly was an universal favourite, that he was regarded as a species of public property, and was so highly valued, that every gate opened for his admission ; and every hospitable board was instantly spread for his comfort, and that of his friends, wherever he appeared.

The popularity of Mr. Sketchly, however, was not of that description which, too often, is sought for in the vanity of distinction for

either real or imaginary talents, which is held on the weakest tenure, being frequently awarded by the caprice of fashion, and as quickly withdrawn on the appearance of any new candidate for admiration ; and which not unusually terminates in the wreck of happiness and of peace of mind. The popularity of the artist was not raised on the talent displayed in the productions of his pencil, although of the highest description of art—poetry embodied by painting—but it was the tribute to private virtue, to the most delicate sense of propriety, to real benevolence, and to unaffected kindness of heart.

On one of these occasions, Mr. Sketchly carried the party to the seat of Mr. Oatlands, on the brow of one of the hills forming the amphitheatre amidst which the modern Athens rises. This visit awakened in their bosoms a new sentiment of friendship for the comely, warm-hearted better half of the Advocate, whose delight seemed to rest on descanting on the merits of her excellent husband, and in dealing out that hospitality which she well knew, had he been at home, would have been lavished upon the Veteran and his party. In shewing them over the grounds, Mr. Sketchly became animated in the praise of his friend.

“ It is here,” said he, after having led them,

through walks bordered with flowers and flowering shrubs, to a noble terrace, constructed on the declivity of the mountain, fenced by a living wall of holly, and commanding one of the most magnificent views in the world,—“it is here that my friend retires from the crowded arena, where his genius predominates, and his eloquence soothes or awes the assembled multitude. There he is the energetic orator ; here, in these delightful recesses of private life, he is the warm friend, the affectionate husband, and the indulgent parent ; there he exults in his gift of fascinating the minds of men, and moulding their opinions, by the sweetness of his persuasive rhetoric ; or hurrying them on to the conclusions which he desires, by the overpowering torrent of his commanding oratory : here he finds a more satisfactory and permanent source of happiness, in the exercise of his taste in improving his grounds, and in the indulgence of his social affections. Devoid of pride or of affectation, gay, even boyish in the buoyancy and simplicity of his heart, his aim is to enjoy life in its meridian, leaving others to squabble for power, or struggle to acquire and to hoard wealth for an imaginary future.”

“By Gad ! Mr. Sketchly !” said the Vete-

ran, charmed with the warmth with which this eulogy was delivered, “none can deny the truth of the remark which you have just uttered. Wealth and fame, the chief objects of life with many, seem to me like the piquets of an enemy, driven in by the main guard of the opposing army, always a day’s march a head of it; and, if it be at length taken, not worth the trouble of the capture.”

It was after one of these expeditions, in which the party had traced the rich banks of the Esk from Roslyn, to the cottage of the amiable, benevolent, and learned Professor of oriental literature in the University of the modern Athens, one of the brightest ornaments of the Scotch church, and had relished his goosberry pie and ginger wine after their walk, that the little coterie was assembled in the drawing room, at Cameron’s, over a cup of coffee. ‘The singular beauty of the architecture, the unequalled richness of the sculpture and tracery in Roslyn chapel, — each striking point in the romantic scenery of the banks of the river, had been amply commented on by Miss Standard and the artist: Aunt Bridget had expressed her horror of the dungeons under Hawthornden: and the Cantab described

to Mrs. Standard, as she performed the duties of the tea-table, the obvious development of the organ of benevolence in the head of the venerable Professor at whose cottage they had lunched. The Veteran was seated apart from the group, in a lounging position, with one leg crossed upon the other, and both outstretched, his elbows resting upon the arms of the chair, his hands locked in one another, and his eyes raised to the ceiling, although evidently not contemplating any thing there, lost in a reverie on the superiority of the modern over the ancient profession of arms.

“ Their defences were miserable,” said he, thinking aloud ; “ their whole system of warfare was brutal : mere corporeal strength triumphed over moral courage and heroic bearing ; and he who could give and could bear the hardest blows was certain of victory. A man,” continued he, turning round and addressing Mr. Sketchly—“ a man in chain or in scale armour, with his helmet and his vizor, with his lance, or his battle-axe, with his horse, with its corselet and caparisons, look well in a picture, my good friend ! but he is of no other use.”

He was proceeding to illustrate his remark,

when the waiter entered and presented him with a letter.

“ It arrived in the morning,” said the man, “ but was by some accident neglected to be delivered.”

I know nothing more vexatious than negligence of this description :—to a commercial man it might prove ruinous of fortune ; to a lawyer, the loss of a client ; life and death might depend upon it as far as regards the physician ; it might bring upon a lover the frown of a mistress ; on a married man, the clamour of his wife ; indeed to most men, a letter, like a newspaper, should be wet when it is opened, otherwise it loses half its interest. It is only to the unfortunate debtor, from an inexorable creditor, or to an author tasked to a day by an importunate publisher, or to the profligate heir of a penurious uncle, that a letter is always in time. The Veteran treated it with indifference.

“ By Gad !” he exclaimed, however, starting up from his position and breaking the seal, “ I am much mistaken if it is not from Caroline. It has made a *détour* to Loch Katrine, and is redirected by the hand of the landlady.”

Every one was on the tiptoe of expectation : it was indeed from Miss Ashton ; and the

Colonel, having wiped his spectacles, read it aloud, as follows :

“ MY EVER DEAREST UNCLE !

“ No words can convey to you an idea of the agony of mind which I have suffered, in reflecting upon the anxiety which you and my dearest Aunt, and Letitia, must have experienced from the extraordinary event which separated me from you. It can only be equalled by the astonishment which you will experience, in hearing me acknowledge that, if I can find happiness, under any circumstances, absent from the dearest and the best of relations, to whom I owe every blessing which has been my lot in this world, I am comparatively happy.”

At the conclusion of this paragraph, the ladies looked at one another with an expression of the greatest surprise : Miss Standard cast her eyes upon the ground and seemed wrapped in thought ; Aunt Bridget half rose from her chair, spread out her lustring, and unfurled her fan ; whilst Mrs. Standard, raising her hand to twirl one of her curls, a custom which always indicated some unusual train of reflection pass-

ing through her mind, ejaculated the word “indeed!” For a minute, the Veteran dropped his hand, which held the letter, upon his knee; exchanged a look with Mrs. Standard, then took a pinch of snuff, wiped again his spectacles, and, without making any remark, recommenced the perusal of the letter.

“Duncan, whose gallant conduct I can never sufficiently admire, nor ever forget, and I hope to be able sometime to reward him for it—”

“Alas! poor fellow!” said the Veteran, pausing for a moment to collect himself, for his lip slightly quivered as he read the lines—“he is beyond any reward which this world can bestow, but he will receive it elsewhere”—and he again began the paragraph.

“Duncan, whose gallant conduct I can never sufficiently admire, nor ever forget, and I hope to be able sometime to reward him for it, would inform you of the manner in which I was carried off. I was no sooner lifted into the carriage than I fainted, and became perfectly unconscious of every thing which passed, until we were near to Callander, when I recovered and found myself seated between two gentlemen. One of them was an elderly man, the individual who had seized me;

the other, a person whom I had observed several times pass us in the Trosachs, and whose look seemed to me to express something like a compassionate interest in my fate. The hand of the elderly gentleman held mine; and, when he perceived that I had recovered, he entreated me to be composed, and to rest assured that nothing was intended which would not contribute to my comfort and happiness. I looked at him with horror, and said nothing; turning to the other gentleman, I entreated him, for Heaven's sake! to inform me where they were conveying me, and for what purpose I was thus torn from my relations. I would have given the world for a flood of tears to relieve my anguish, but I could not cry. My temples throbbed, and my forehead burned as if my brain were on fire: the light was too much for my eyes; I closed them, and then felt that my mind was wandering—that I was becoming delirious. It was in vain that I strove to collect my thoughts; I have been since informed that I had a kind of fit, which greatly alarmed my companions, but I was unconscious of it. In my delirium, I imagined that I was again with you and my dearest Aunt and Letitia: that I was ill and in bed; that you and my Aunt were sitting beside me, and dear Aunt Bridget

and Letitia were bending over me, bathing my burning head with cold water. There was another person, whom I need not name, also present. He looked ill and dejected ; but the same open, frank, intelligent expression shone through his melancholy ; the same graceful, delicate, and attentive demeanour which attracted my attention, and first impressed me with a sentiment till then a stranger to my bosom, was now displayed. He gazed upon me with an expression at once anxious, compassionate, and encouraging. I strove to speak, but could give no utterance to my thoughts : I struggled violently to accomplish it, but could not. At once you all, save him, seemed to leave me ; whilst a complete tumult of images and events passed rapidly through my brain ; one vivid picture of the past succeeding another like lightning ; in all, the same well-known countenance was never absent.

“ I continued in this state for nearly two days ; and, when I recovered my consciousness, I found myself in bed, in a strange apartment, with the finger of a physician upon my pulse, and a young woman standing near him. I enquired where I was ; for all that had occurred had passed away like a dream. The doctor informed me that I was in Edinburgh, that I had

been very ill, and that I was still in a condition which required quiet and repose. I conjured him to inform me whether I could see you and my dear Aunt, for the fact of our separation had completely escaped from my mind ; yet, it was difficult to reconcile the circumstance of being in Edinburgh, when I believed that I had, only a few hours before, been at the Trosachs. The worthy Doctor, as he took his leave, pressed my hand gently, and assured me, if I remained quiet, I should soon be sufficiently well to see anybody.

“ The young woman staid by me, and did every thing to render me comfortable, anticipating my little wants and nursing me with the utmost assiduity and tenderness ; but I could obtain no information respecting my situation, except that I was in one of the first hotels in Edinburgh with a near relation, who would see me as soon as the Doctor should give permission for the interview. I tortured my poor brain, to no purpose, in conjecturing who this relation could be. I finally concluded that it must be you, my dearest Uncle, for I knew no other near relation in this world, although I could not comprehend why I was prevented from then seeing you. I remembered, however, your remark, that “ time

flows with a steady current, and the woes of the most wretched must sooner or later terminate," and I bore up as well as I could. The day passed away ; and, by the aid of an anodyne which the good Doctor prescribed for me, I enjoyed a night of refreshing sleep, and awoke, apparently well, on the following morning ; so that I was up and dressed when the Physician paid his visit. He found me so much better that he proposed a change of apartment ; and, lending me his arm, he conducted me into a drawing room on the same floor ; where, after having chatted for a few minutes, he rose and left me.

“ When alone, my thoughts instantly recurred to the events of the few preceding days : —the cloud of mystery which hung over them ; the obscurity which veiled the future ;—my utter ignorance of every thing connected with my present situation, perplexed my mind ; and I sickened with conjecture. I was seated upon the sofa, with my forehead resting upon my hand, when the door gently opened, and a tall, elderly gentleman, with a military air, entered. Although his hair was grey, yet, none of the other symptoms of age were obvious on his erect and manly form ; he smiled ; but the keen glance of his bright hazel eyes seemed to penetrate to my very soul. I gazed at him, and im-

mediately recognized him as the person who had forced me into the carriage. Oh ! my dear Uncle, conceive what were then my feelings ! The idea instantly flashed upon my mind that I was destined to be the victim of the dishonourable sentiments of this old man, and that I was completely in his power. A cold shudder came over my frame. I rose from my seat ; shrieked aloud,—‘ help ! help ! ’ and was in the act of rushing to the door, when he hastily advanced, and, taking both my hands gently, yet firmly, constrained me to be again seated. He then drew a chair near to the sofa and sat down. In spite of the terror which shook me, with a degree of courage which, you know, is foreign to my nature, I felt emboldened to speak. ‘ Why have you brought me here ? by what authority do you detain me ? Young and inexperienced as I am, my acquaintance with the world is sufficient to inform me that the step which you have taken is illegal, and will meet the punishment it merits.’

“ The stern look which he gave me in reply was mingled with a satirical expression, allied to surprise, at my boldness ; and, although he smiled, yet, the steadfastness of his gaze in an instant dissipated all my determination ; my spirit shrunk under it ; and, dropping upon my knees, I supplicated him to take pity upon

my helplessness, and to restore me to my friends. As the old man raised me, his sternness seemed to dissolve :—as he looked in my face, and a smile, no longer of contempt or of satire, but of kindness, seemed to play upon his lips ; and, again reseating me, he replied—

“ ‘ You have a right to put these questions, and it is unnecessary to delay answering them : my authority is that which a parent possesses over his child. Miss Atkinson, for Ashton is your mother’s name, not yours, you see before you one, perhaps, of the most blameable of men, but one who has suffered most severely for his errors—your father.’ ”

“ ‘ Gracious Heavens !’ I exclaimed ; and in an instant every thing in the room swam before my eyes, and I fainted. On recovering, I found the young woman, who had previously attended me, chafing my temples with eau de Cologne, and my father pacing the room with a countenance expressive of the greatest anxiety. On perceiving that I had revived, he advanced towards me, and, taking my hand, addressed me in the most soothing accents.’ ”

“ ‘ My dearest Caroline !’ he said—‘ I perceive that your nerves are not yet equal to the communication which I was prepared to make to you ; I shall leave you to the care of your

maid, and shall delay, until to-morrow, what I had to say.'

" 'No! no!' I exclaimed; 'do not leave me! do not go! you have awakened ideas in my mind which must be confirmed or instantly obliterated.'

" He regarded me for a few seconds, as if hesitating whether to go or to remain; then, beckoning to the young woman to withdraw, he placed a chair near me and again sat down.

" 'I have already informed you,' said he, holding my hand which he had again taken between both of his, 'that I am your father—a guilty and most blameable man; but, my dearest child! I have suffered all the pangs which remorse can inflict upon a conscience happily, at length, alive to a sense of crimes of which it most sincerely repents.'

" I gazed at him intensely as he spoke: there was an austerity, softened down by an expression of settled melancholy, in his look, which forcibly arrested my attention; a new feeling arose in my bosom: I was disposed to throw myself into his arms, yet my desire was restrained by doubts which I could not overcome. I believed—hesitated—and again believed. I wished to speak, but my tongue seemed as if glued to the roof of my mouth;

my heart beat violently—I breathed short—I tried to speak, it was in vain—and I sat gazing upon him in silent, almost stupid astonishment. He quickly perceived what was passing in my mind.

“ ‘ Your doubts,’ he remarked, ‘ are natural ; they shall be dissipated in an instant ;’ and, unfolding a paper which I had not previously perceived in his hand, ‘ there,’ continued he, ‘ is the certificate of my marriage with your much-injured mother.’

“ Mother ! I uttered. The word fell upon my ear like a spell :—my whole frame trembled ; and I must have fallen, had not my eyes been eagerly directed to the document which was to dispel the doubts which still settled on my mind. ‘ The certificate was dated at Langholme, the year previous to my birth, and was signed, “ Henry Martin, minister.” I gazed on the paper and on my father alternately.

“ ‘ Yes, my beloved child !’ he proceeded, ‘ this is the proof of our relationship, of my union with your mother, whose fostering care you have never known ; whose bosom had scarcely heaved with the breath of maternal tenderness before you were taken from her—who would not now recognize her offspring—who has never heard you speak.’

“ He paused : as he held my hand, I felt a tremor pass over him ; he forcibly compressed his lips ; and, whilst he gazed stedfastly in my face, his eyes glistened through the moisture which suffused them. Oh ! my dearest uncle ! how can I tell you the condition of my heart at that moment ?—suffocated—I gasped for breath !

“ ‘ Tell me,’ I exclaimed, scarcely able to articulate my words, and grasping his arm with my freed hand, ‘ tell me, does my mother still live ? where is she ?—shall, oh ! shall I ever feel her arms around me ? shall I see—shall I—’

“ I staggered, for I had risen from the sofa as I spoke ; and I fainted on my father’s neck. I was revived by his tears falling fast upon my hand, which he pressed to his lips ; I could no longer doubt :—every word which he had uttered sunk to my heart, and found a resting place there. ‘ I believe—I believe—it is enough—guilty or innocent—yes ! you are my father—I am your child,’ I exclaimed, and sunk upon his bosom : he folded me in his arms, and we both wept aloud.”

The worthy Veteran laid the letter upon the table, took off his spectacles, passed the fore-fingers of his right hand rapidly across his

eyes, and stretched out his left to his daughter, who had edged her chair close to his, during the perusal of her cousin's narrative. She and Aunt Bridget were in tears; and both the kind-hearted artist and the Cantab were much affected; Mrs. Standard alone did not appear to feel the situation which her niece had so vividly described; perhaps a strong sense of her sister's wrongs overpowered the natural feelings of that lady:—I cannot hazard an opinion upon the subject. It is, nevertheless, a curious fact, that, whilst women are far from being ready to throw a veil over the frailties of their erring sisters, but, on the contrary, are the most rigorous of their judges, they are equally implacable and unforgiving of any injuries which they suffer from the opposite sex. The retrospect of Mrs. Standard's knowledge of her brother-in-law was tinged with the deepest disgust; his crimes rose before her in all the darkness of their midnight horrors; and therefore she could not see, in the future, a single ray of hope, however apparently sincere his contrition. To return from this digression, in a few minutes, the Colonel resumed the perusal of the letter.

“ I will not, my dearest Uncle, fatigue you by writing the narrative of my father's story,

with the details of which you must be familiar ; namely, the origin of his acquaintance with my unhappy mother, her elopement and marriage, my birth, and the melancholy events which separated me so early from her. Suffice it to say that my father has informed me that, for several years, he has ardently desired to throw himself at her feet, and to implore her forgiveness for his errors ; but all his efforts, either to obtain an interview with her, or to effect a reconciliation, have hitherto failed. He feels that his object can only be fulfilled through my means ; and that is the apology which he has to offer for gaining possession of me in the manner which he employed. To the question why he had not made his wishes known to you, he assured me that he had corresponded with you on the subject, but that you refused to give me up. ‘ The destiny,’ said he, in replying to my question, ‘ which made your Uncle and myself implacable enemies, was augmented in force by exaggerated and hostile reports of guilt, which prevented us from ever meeting ; for we could not have met without sentiments being expressed on both sides, which might have led to an event capable of involving both in irrevocable misery. We belong to a profession which admits of only one appeal for the indig-

nity even of a word ; and grey-headed experience has taught me that where relations are concerned discretion is the better part of valour. I had, therefore, no alternative but to gain possession of you in any way ; and, although I regret the distress it has occasioned to you, yet, I hail the success of the plot as the day-spring of a short gleam of happiness, which may dispel, at the close of life, the sombre clouds which have shaded too many years of its meridian.'

" I strongly petitioned to be permitted to write to you, but the reply of my father was— ' I have strong reasons for restraining you from doing so at present : in due time you shall have the opportunity of informing your Uncle of every thing which has occurred ; but this is not the proper moment for such a communication.' You will, therefore, my dearest Uncle ! perceive the cause of my silence ; and you will cease to wonder at not having sooner heard from me.

" The day after this conversation with my unhappy parent, we left Edinburgh, and proceeded to Melrose, where, instead of stopping in the inn, we went to a lodging which had been previously taken for us. We were three days in Melrose, being detained by the sudden indisposition of my father, on which account I

rarely walked out. We had visited the ruins on the afternoon of our arrival ; but I was eager to examine them at that time which Sir Walter Scott describes as the best. On the third night, therefore, after my father retired to bed, I threw a warm shawl over my shoulders, and issued out, alone, at eleven o'clock. I think I see my dear Aunt holding up her hands at the boldness of her indiscreet niece ; and the result made me almost repent my temerity. The principal street of the little town was completely deserted ; every door was closed ; every candle out, and the inhabitants were already asleep, when I entered the church-yard ; and, walking over the graves, placed myself in the most favourable situation to see the interior of the ruin through the great window.

“ It was my intention to take only the most hurried look ; but, as my feet were riveted to the spot by the magnificence of the ruin, softened by the light of the moon, hung in an unclouded sky, half an hour elapsed before I even thought of the singularity of the situation in which I was standing. At length, my attention was roused by a light appearing within the Abbey, and the sound of voices. The silence without was such that I could hear every sentence which was uttered. I heard

the girl, who was shewing the ruin to the strangers, whoever they were, describing my visit two days before : I thought, my dearest Uncle, that I heard the voice of one who is ever nearest to my thoughts ; and I listened with breathless expectation, but the voices ceased. In a few minutes, the key turned in the door which opens into the church-yard ; I dreaded to be observed ; but I had only to fly to a corner, beneath the shade of some trees, where I stood concealed. One person only, of three who came out, remained ; it was not him whom I expected to see. He placed himself on the very spot which I had left. I held my breath lest it should betray my presence ; and it was not until I thought that his attention was completely abstracted, by the object upon which he was gazing, that I ventured from my retreat, and hurried along a gravel walk that leads out of the church-yard. I had scarcely reached the stile, which opens into the street, when, glancing round, I perceived I was followed. Fear, however, gave celerity to my flight ; and, in a few minutes, I re-entered the little parlour, where I had left the candles burning. You may conceive, but I cannot describe, the trepidation which seized me, on finding myself secure.”

“ What an escape from such an act of imprudence !” said Mrs. Standard.

“ Poor dear Caroline !” said Letitia.

“ An escape indeed ! I should have died of fright ! to be pursued by a man at that time of night ! The very thought makes my blood run cold,” chimed in Aunt Bridget.

“ By Gad ! you might have walked quietly home, Biddy,” coolly remarked the Veteran ; and he went on with the perusal of the letter.

“ We left Melrose at five o’clock the next morning, and arrived in London on the third day afterwards, without any incident worthy of notice. My father has displayed to me the utmost kindness ; and it is by his permission that I now write to you. I try to love him, for every thing he does has a view to my happiness : but there is a sternness in his look, which even his smile cannot veil, and which checks my approaches. How often ! how very often ! my dearest Uncle ! do I seem to see your kind and open, benevolent countenance gazing upon me ; and then I dream of home. Alas !—I have not yet learnt to know any other home.

“ My father has informed me that we shall proceed to Ghent, where he understands my mother is now residing, if she be alive ; and he

expects, through my interference, to be again united to her.

“ I cannot say more, my dearest Uncle ! than to assure you and my beloved Aunt that, were it possible for me to be happy absent from you, to believe myself at home—can I call that place home where you are not ?—I am happy. Tell dearest Letitia that I now feel the truth of that sentiment she has so often expressed, but which I have never before understood, that no friendship, no connection in life, produces feelings in the mind equivalent to those of parent and child. Do remember me, most warmly, to all our fellow travellers : need I mention one in particular ? Adieu ! my ever dearest Uncle ! My prayer—my hope, is to bring you and my father amicably together.

“ Heaven bless you, my dearest Uncle !

“ Your unalterably affectionate niece,

“ CAROLINE.”

The artist and the Cantab soon took their leave ; and the letter of Miss Atkinson became the subject of discussion for the remainder of the evening. The eccentric character of Colonel Atkinson was considered as sufficient to account for the means he had adopted to gain possession of his daughter. Every one now

hoped that the pursuing party would not encounter the fugitives ; the Veteran, in particular, dreaded any collision of the two parties. It was finally determined that the family should immediately leave Edinburgh for the metropolis ; and thence proceed to Ghent, where they expected to arrive before the pursuers could gain intimation of Colonel Atkinson's intention of crossing to Belgium.

The feelings of the Veteran towards Colonel Atkinson were those of a generous and high-minded gentleman. He had never seen his brother-in-law ; he knew his character only by report ; but the injuries which Atkinson had heaped upon his unhappy wife had aroused sentiments of disgust towards him in the mind of the Veteran ; and, until he could be assured that his niece would not be exposed to the dangers which he feared would be her fate under the roof of her father, he could not consent to part with her. His sentiments, however, were altered when he learned his brother-in-law's anxiety for a reconciliation with his wife, if it should appear that she was still alive : for, although he could not regard her as altogether blameless, yet, he justly considered that any trivial errors of conduct, on her part, were more than sufficiently punished by what she

had suffered. He had no personal dislike to his brother-in-law, and he was even ignorant of the extent of his misconduct. He knew, however, that Colonel Atkinson had never enquired after his daughter, nor expressed any interest in her fate, until she had attained the age of womanhood; and as he had no certainty that his sister-in-law was still alive, and as he feared that the female society into which his niece might be thrown would not be that fitted to insure the happiness of a young woman entering into life, he had resisted every attempt of Atkinson to regain possession of his daughter.

Mrs. Standard judged Atkinson more severely than the Veteran; she suspected the sincerity of any change in his character and conduct: she regarded him as a person indelibly stamped with the brand of vice. On the mention even of his name, the injury done to her sister arose to her mental eye in all its original magnitude: she could never forgive him; she regarded him as a contemptible voluptuary: and she shuddered to think upon the influence which his society, and his associates, might have upon the hitherto untainted mind of her niece.

But, however opposite the opinions of the Veteran and Mrs. Standard were upon the re-

formation, as they termed it, of Colonel Atkinson, they agreed in the necessity of instantly proceeding to London; and, if necessary, to Ghent. The following morning was fixed upon for their departure. The necessary arrangements for that purpose had been fully canvassed, and the party was about to retire for the night, when Mr. Sketchly entered with a letter from Mr. Mordaunt. It ran as follows:

“ My dear Sketchly,

“ We arrived at the Clarendon last night at ten o'clock, after a rapid and unsatisfactory journey, at least unsatisfactory as far as regards the object we had in view. What will you think when I inform you that we were twelve hours in Melrose, while Miss Ashton was living in the opposite house without our knowing it? and yet, since that time, we have not been able to gain the smallest information respecting her.

“ I am puzzled what to think. My mind is on the rack of suspense, I may almost say of despair. At one time, I feel excited to a degree which would lead me not only to pursue the spoiler of my happiness to the end of the world, but even to lay aside my sacred calling, and punish the miscreant in a way which it proscribes: at another, I find myself asking the

question, is it possible that he has been able to work upon the affections of Miss Ashton ? The extraordinary fact of her willing sojournment with him has reached our ears wherever we have heard any tidings of her. How can this be explained ? If she has made her election, what right have I to interfere in her choice ? I cannot answer. My wishes—my thoughts—my recollections—my dreams—my hopes, persuade me that I have a right ; but my cooler reason denies the correctness of the decision. I have never declared myself directly to Miss Ashton : she is disengaged as far as regards me ; and, if she has been fascinated into so incongruous an union, as I presume it must be, if report speak true of the age of the person who has presumed on so extraordinary a mode of obtaining her hand, again I say—what right have I to interfere ? Her docile, pliant, and grateful nature might be worked upon by kindness : long, attentive, and endearing kindness might draw from her a return of love, even to one labouring under all the disadvantage of disparity of years ; but, in this case, it is impossible : attraction—sentiment—heart—are not there : she has not given her affection to the individual who has carried her off—she must be re-created ere that can happen.

“ Sketchly, how I envy your free, unfettered condition ! Your art, your enviable, creative pencil engrosses your whole soul—you have no time to be wretched. I am completely—perhaps deservedly so. Like soap bubbles, scarcely blown before they burst, have been all my resolutions : often manly, but deficient in the bone and muscle which give stability, they have melted away : in a word, my flexibility has been my bane ; I have never enjoyed life with discretion, nor perhaps have ever pursued the path best suited to my temperament. The death of Louisa Manvers drove me from the army : I settled down into a churchman, and formed the determination to remain single, and to be wedded only to literature and my clerical duties. I had planned my career, and fancied myself steeled against temptation. The accident which threw me into the society of Colonel Standard and his family only proved that experience of its dangers had not changed the pliability of my nature. I saw Caroline Ashton, and, for the first time, since my heart knew the poignancy of that grief which it had too fondly nurtured, I felt an irresistible interest in another :—still I thought myself secure. The image of her whom I had lost was my boasted pride, my consolation ; the child of my

imagination, cradled in my heart, I neither dreamt nor thought of, nor could admit any other. But human resolution is surpassed by human weakness. The intelligence, the noble frankness, the gentle, feminine virtues of Miss Ashton soon secured my esteem and admiration ; happy, perhaps, would it have been had they touched no other chord—awakened no other sentiment : but the sternest philosopher, my dear Sketchly, sometimes finds that he has a heart in his bosom : his accumulated science—his metaphysical depth—his pride of intellect—his stoical coolness, are destined to do homage to the fascinating smile of beauty, and are compelled to own the divinity of its power. The delicious poison has entered my soul ; nightly does my memory revert to that hour when my sentiments were almost involuntarily unveiled to Miss Ashton, although my tongue made no acknowledgment of my passion. It was on the little esplanade before the inn at Loch Kateran : the moon shone above us, and silvered the silent lake which spread below. Caroline hung upon my arm, and we continued our walk for sometime after the rest of the party had retired. The usual mirthful playfulness of my companion had given place to thoughtful calmness ; her auburn ringlets parted on her open

forehead, although they half shaded her face as her eye rested upon the ground, yet could not wholly conceal the recurring blush which rose as the conversation touched the sympathetic chords of the heart. Warmed by the subject, as I painted to her the domestic bliss, the fireside paradise of my friend Manvers, and exclaimed how I longed to have the scattered feelings of my heart centered in such a focus, my hand insensibly fell upon her's—it trembled beneath my touch—I instinctively grasped it—she stopped short, as if to require an explanation—our eyes met—a blush suffused her countenance ;—but, in an instant, recovering her self-possession, she said, in a subdued tone of voice, “ Mr. Mordaunt, it is late, let us return.” Why did I not then declare myself ? I might hesitate to answer ; but both you and Manvers will recognize, as its origin, that indecision for which you have often lectured me, and from which I have too often suffered.

“ But, my dear Sketchly, I am filling my paper with the romance of sentiment, when I should be detailing to you the news of our journey. Hitherto, as I have said, our object has been frustrated. One thing, however, has been effected. Besides confirming all the ideas which I had formed of the warm, unso-

phisticated heart, good sense, and energy of character, of our joint friend Oatlands,—it has brought out, in the most engaging colours, that of the worthy Doctor. He is—† * * *

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“ Sketchly, do not judge me by the romance of this epistle. Under any circumstances, it is not my intention to waste my manhood in the lap of indolence. When you visit me at the Rectory of Lonsdale, whether you find me the happy husband, enjoying the blessings of domestic quiet, or the solitary recluse, seeking my solace in friendship, expect to see me an active parish priest, labouring, I trust, worthily in my vocation, not only in the limited circle of my clerical duties, but striving to extend the sphere of my usefulness. I have ambition enough to hope that, by some effort, I may roll back the wave of oblivion from overwhelming my memory.

“ Remember me to Colonel Standard and the ladies.

“ Adieu! ever yours,

“ FREDERICK MORDAUNT.”

† My friend the Doctor, with his inherent modesty, had so effaced the eulogy upon himself as to render it completely unintelligible.—EDITOR.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Sighing, as through the shadowy past,
Like a tomb-searcher, Memory ran,
Lifting each shroud that Time had cast
O'er buried hopes.”—

MOORE.

FREDERICK MORDAUNT and his two friends had been already three days in London, without having advanced a single step towards the attainment of the object of their visit. They had not previously reflected that no where, when obscurity and concealment are desired, can a man bury himself so completely from the prying eye of notoriety as amidst the dense population of the metropolis. In that ever-flowing tide, that absorbing, mighty current, into whose channel the whole world pours its tributary streams of life, individuals, like drops falling upon the wave, instantly disappear. It was therefore less wonderful that the friends should lose all traces of the fugitives, than that they should stumble upon their path. Indeed, they had no clue for their guidance. At the hotels, elderly gentlemen and handsome young ladies were hourly arriving: the description of the

fugitives was too vague to enable any information to be obtained through the medium of the police, or the public offices: the pursuers were consequently constrained to trust to chance for that which could not be procured by any systematic plan of enquiry.

Mr. Mordaunt, on entering London, was again in the midst of a circle of acquaintance, whom he had known when the gay and handsome guardsman; by whom he had been courted and caressed, and who were still eager to hold out to him the hand of fellowship: but his spirits had sunk too low to allow him to relish any society; he even felt anxious to shun the recognition of those with whom he had formed real friendships, whom he loved and respected. He felt that the world had grown hateful to him; and, in the midst of the most crowded haunts of humanity under the canopy of heaven,—where the air is never still from “the busy hum of men”—the streets are never empty,—where no hour can be termed that of silence and repose,—did Frederick Mordaunt seek solitude and seclusion. He rarely left the hotel in the day-time: and, only after the shades of night began to be closed in, muffled up in his cloak, he strolled out around the neighbouring Squares, or occasionally into Hyde Park, to breathe a little fresh air, or to enjoy the soothing in-

fluence of the evening breeze upon his wasted and feverish cheek.

It was in one of these solitary rambles,—the dark-blue vault of heaven was studded with myriads of stars, reflected in the purple mirror of the Serpentine, dark and motionless, whilst the planets, undiminished by the absence of the moon, shone out with more than usual brilliancy, simulating little suns,—that Mr. Mor-daunt, sauntering along the walk between York and Cumberland gates, observed streams of light issuing from a mansion in Park Lane, and carriage after carriage setting down visitors. He paused for a few minutes, opposite to the house, to indulge a reflection, which had suggested itself to his mind. It referred to the pains with which mankind fly the true sources of happiness, to seek it in the artificial state of the feelings which were required to enjoy the gay scene before him: the fatigue and subsequent ennui which follow it; and the altogether unsatisfactory character of the pleasure which it affords, compared with that resulting from the contemplation of the beautiful and the sublime in natural scenery, and the peaceful associations of domestic life in the country. As he was gazing upon the brilliant equipages which crowded the street, he recollected that it was somewhere near this spot,

—if it were not really in the same house,—that Lord Rochdale lived. The recollections which this recognition brought forward, in all their freshness, before the mental eye of Mr. Mordaunt, were of the most painful description. Louisa Munvers stood before him—her last words, “I know your heart is unaffected—is the same,” fell upon his ear; whilst his reply—“and it ever will be, dearest Louisa!” seemed to put the question, “how has that assurance been fulfilled?” Gloomily, and discontented with himself, he withdrew his eye from the house and walked onwards. But in the human heart, as in heaven, there are many mansions: when the flame of affection is extinguished in one, it is lighted up in another; the sincerest vows, sworn in the conviction that they are irrevocable, engraven on eternal adamant, yield to the touch of time, and every trace of them is effaced from the tablet of the memory. We justify ourselves by circumstances; inclination pleads at the bar of conscience; the judge dozes, and the culprit is acquitted. Frederick Mordaunt, although dissatisfied with the examination of his feelings, which the retrospect, forced upon him by this recognition, had produced, yet found an apology in the peculiarity of the circumstances in which the death of

Miss Manvers had placed him. He had quitted a profession which had tutored him for the excitements of society, and engendered habits the opposite of those which he had led since a parish priest. Daily experience had also taught him that he was not fitted for the life of a bachelor ; that even friendship, with all its charms, was an imperfect substitute for that reciprocal affection, that domestic bliss, which his fancy pictured, with the warmth of the highest poetic colouring, might have been his lot, had his anticipations not been blighted by the fate of her in whom all his earliest affections had centered. He had wisely sought his consolation, and found his solitude cheered, in the performance of his sacred duties ; and, whilst he spoke to others of the vanity of all things on this side of the grave, he himself had become wiser ; he had brought the instruction home to his own bosom, and profited by the lessons that he taught. The melancholy, however, which had settled upon his character still tinctured all his feelings ; indeed, it had been fostered and kept alive by the almost hourly contemplation of the loss he had sustained : the gentle, feminine virtues of Louisa Manvers were ever vividly present in his mind ; even amidst his growing affection for Miss

Ashton, he sometimes felt the iron of remorse entering his soul, as if the purity of the love which had been first awakened in it—that sole remaining spark of his divine origin in fallen man, unalloyed by the dross of passion—which is never kindled but once in the human bosom, had been sullied by a second attachment. In the present state of Mr. Mordaunt's feelings,—oppressed by the mystery which involved the fate of Miss Ashton,—stung by the doubts which had arisen in his mind respecting her sincerity,—his heart warmed again when these sentiments crowded upon his mind, and with the old associations, which the incident of seeing Lord Rochdale's mansion had called up. He stopped under a group of trees; the stream of light from the windows of the gay mansion almost reached the spot where he stood; and, in the shadows of the figures crossing and recrossing it, in the crowded drawing room, his fancy conjured up his friend Manvers, Lady Mary, and even the stately form of the Earl. He felt ashamed that he had not already sought them out; and, resolving to retrieve his neglect as soon as possible, he walked on till he, almost instinctively, found himself on the threshold of the mansion. It was indeed Lord Rochdale's; and, learning from a servant that Mr. Manvers

was in town, he left his card, with an intimation that he should call on the following day.

It had just struck ten o'clock ; the breakfast equipage, in a snug parlour in the Clarendon, was still on the table, Mr. Mordaunt was poring over the Morning Herald, and I, counting the number of advertisements in a double sheet of the Times,—Oatlands had set off early for the City,—when the door of the room was opened by a gentleman in black, who, advancing, ejaculated the word “Mordaunt !” The Clergyman raised his head—started from his seat—and in an instant his hand was locked in that of Dudley Manvers.

When the first salutations were over, and the burst of sterling friendship, which marked the meeting of these two excellent men, had subsided, and Mr. Mordaunt had introduced me to his friend, I, listened with admiration to the unusually exalted tone of conversation which the occasion seemed to have created in the worthy Clergyman. I had often admired Mr. Mordaunt's power of delineating character, and describing the places which he had visited ; but they were thrown into the shade by the animation which this meeting infused into his account of the events which had passed since the two friends had met, and the brilliant effects of the poetic

touchings of his pencil on the scenery of his northern tour, which he delineated with a minuteness demonstrative of the deep interest with which he had viewed them.

“Your descriptions delight and interest me,” said Mr. Manvers: “but, Frederick, tell me something of your rectory: is it still untenanted, except by its hermit-rector?”

The countenance of Mr. Mordaunt fell, and a half-stifled sigh escaped from his breast. His friend instantly perceived that he had touched a vibrating cord, and changed the conversation.

“You must come and see Lady Mary,” said he: “you know, Frederick, you were always a favourite of the old lady, who is as great a valetudinarian as ever, living by system, and corresponding with her dear Doctor P——. The Earl left town for Rochdale this morning. I wish you had stepped in last night.”

“I was not dressed for a party,” replied Mr. Mordaunt.

“It is the first ‘at home’ Lady Mary has given since her arrival in town. Most of my father’s political associates were there; plenty of mammas with daughters on sale; some beauty, and abundance of fashion. You have been so long out of the town world, you would

have been amused. By the bye!—there was one person there whom you would hardly guess.”

“ I have no clue to hazard a conjecture,” responded Mr. Mordaunt.

“ You recollect meeting, in the church-yard at Rochdale, a person of the name of Atkinson ?” rejoined Mr. Manvers. “ He is now a colonel in the army. My father, who gave him his first commission, is proud of his advancement. But there is something in the expression of his countenance which keeps up my original bad opinion of him. He is said to be a widower. He brought with him a young lady, still in her teens, whom he introduced to my Aunt as his daughter. She is, my dear fellow ! the most softly beautiful and feminine being I have ever seen ; and her beauty is heightened, to my eyes, by a trace of settled sadness in the expression of her lovely countenance, when not lighted up by conversation, which greatly interested me. She reminded me of my dear Louisa.”

Mordaunt became thoughtful.

“ There is, however,” continued Mr. Manvers, “ more intellect in her expression than I recollect in poor Louisa’s. She is rather below the middle stature : her hair is auburn,

with a profusion of natural curls, shadowing a smooth and capacious forehead. Her features are comely, but not symmetrically beautiful; but when she smiles,—oh! it is the smile of an angel! to such a susceptible heart as your's, Frederick, it would be dangerously fascinating."

"My dear Manvers," rejoined Mordaunt, "I have never before heard you expatiate so enthusiastically on female charms. Were you a bachelor, or a widower, I should imagine you fairly entangled. Does she converse fluently?"

"I had little opportunity of sounding the depth of her intellect or acquirements," responded Mr. Manvers; "but sufficient to convince me that she possesses a romantic and highly cultivated taste for natural scenery. She described to me the Trosachs in such rich, poetic language, yet so singularly free from bombast, that I could have listened for ever. Nevertheless, her romantic admiration is tinged with some melancholy recollections; for, as she concluded the description, she cast her eyes upon the floor, and seemed to try to stifle a sigh which escaped from her bosom."

"The Trosachs!" ejaculated Mordaunt; and he bit his lips, and appeared at once lost in reverie. "Can it be?" thought he, almost

speaking the ideas that were passing through his mind ; “ it is impossible ! a father has no occasion to run away with his child ;—and how could the daughter of Richard Atkinson be the niece of Colonel Standard ?—and her name Ashton ? ”—He put his hand to his forehead.

“ You are absent, Mordaunt,” said Mr. Manvers ; “ my account of this beauty has sent your fancy wandering. ‘ There, however, is that, with regard to her, which, much as her beauty and her manner interest, I wish to know more about. I suspect—I strongly suspect—that she is not Atkinson’s daughter. When she took leave, as she curtsied to Lady Mary, her smile, fascinating and lovely as it is, spoke not of a happy heart : her step and movement were elegant, but they seemed joyless ; she hung upon the arm of Atkinson, but not as a daughter, proud in the affection of a father.’ ”

Mr. Mordaunt was evidently embarrassed : his friend Manvers fixed his gaze upon him, and then looked at me, as if demanding an explanation. I could give him none, although his remarks had shed a ray of light upon the mystery which had so long perplexed me.

“ My father is proud of Atkinson,” continued Mr. Manvers ; “ he has had little opportunity of perceiving the shades in his character

which have always made me avoid him ; he has merely traced his rise in his profession ; and now he regards him as a triumphant example of the value of patronage to youthful talent, in a rank of life where it would otherwise be worse than useless, as it might probably engender mischief, were it left unaided to struggle with the world."

" So generous a feeling," said I, " is honorable to the Earl."

Mr. Mordaunt still remained absorbed in thought. Mr. Manvers ascribed this to associations which his mention of his sister's funeral had awakened in the memory of his friend : he kindly took his hand, and endeavoured to 'change the train of his ideas by remarking—

" Why, Frederick ! my dear fellow ! you are in a reverie. Come, come ! you shall see this paragon. It is probable that Atkinson and his daughter may be again at my father's to-morrow, as Lady Mary means to have a small, select party. You will be charmed with 'the musical powers and the refined sentiment of this beauty. You will then be convinced that I have not appreciated them too highly,—that I do not paint from imagination,—that it is a portrait far beneath the grace and loveliness of

the original. By the bye, she sang some stanzas which I never before heard, except from yourself. I was pleased with them; and I wrote them down from your dictation. At the time, I believed them to be your own."

"Let me hear them," said Mr. Mordaunt, roused by the remark.

"Most certainly—if I can recollect them," replied his friend; "but do not pretend, my dear fellow, to claim the merit of their production."

Ah ! Ladye ! life can only know
 But once its young and sunny hours,
 Its airy dance on fairy ground,
 Bespangled o'er with rainbow flowers.

At first, Hope whispers only joy,
 And Love within the heart is born,
 While life's lights are the rosy hues
 That fringe the fleecy clouds of morn.

Alas ! such fairy flowers must fade ;
 Hope dies upon the darken'd air,
 And the warm heart, which cradled Love,
 Is the lone home of cold Despair.

"Are you in earnest?" rejoined Mr. Mordaunt, eagerly. "Did Miss Atkinson really sing these words?"

“ She really did ; and not only sweetly, but with much feeling.”

Mr. Mordaunt again gazed inquisitively in his friend's face. The colour fled his countenance, and an involuntary shudder came over him.

“ What is the matter, my dear Frederick ?” enquired Mr. Manvers, as he noticed this sudden change.

Mordaunt essayed to speak ; but, for a few seconds, he could not. The verses were indeed his writing : he had never given a copy of them to any one but Caroline Ashton. The description of Miss Atkinson by his friend—the verses—the details which he had heard at Melrose—all conspired to confirm the heart-rending truth—for he believed it to be such—which had flashed upon his mind, that the so termed Miss Atkinson and Caroline Ashton were one and the same individual ; and that the means employed by Atkinson, whatever they were, had succeeded in making her the willing companion of that libertine. A cold, paralyzing hand seemed now placed upon the heart of the unhappy Clergyman ; whilst his bosom was bursting with the accumulated blood arrested in its current. A deep and convulsive sob or two came to his

relief: in a few minutes reaction supervened, a flush overspread the previous pallidness of his face, his languid eye glistened, and, rising from his seat, he grasped the hand of Mr. Manvers, and said, in a firm, collected tone of voice,—

“ My excellent friend, overlook and forgive my weakness; but conduct me directly to the house of Colonel Atkinson. The lady who has so much interested you is not his daughter; her name is Ashton; he has carried her off from her relations, and—” Here his lips were firmly compressed, and a momentary tremor again shook his whole frame. “ He has, I fear, triumphed over her—affection. I cannot, now, tell you all—which you shall know—respecting her, and my interest in her fate: but no moment must be lost; come,—lead me to the abode of that most abandoned of all unprincipled men, Colonel Atkinson.”

“ The event which my friend has just described,” said I, “ is indeed the cause of our visit to the metropolis.”

The surprise depicted on the countenance of Mr. Manvers may be conceived, but it cannot be described. He took up his hat, and, at the same time, informed his friend that Colonel

Atkinson's lodgings were unknown to him ; but if he would walk with him as far as Green Street, they might there obtain information respecting them. Mordaunt placed his arm within that of Mr. Manvers, and the friends instantly left the house.

They had scarcely departed, before my mind turned to investigate the following speculation : whether, in such a condition of corporeal collapse and reaction as I had just witnessed, caused either by deep grief, or some unhappy event, suddenly and unexpectedly occurring, the integrity of the mind often remains unaffected, whilst the principle of association, operating as in a dream, the boundaries of time and space are broken down, and the events of a life crowded within the lapse of a few moments ? Such, my worthy friend long afterwards informed me, was the effect of this development of the mystery which involved the fate of Caroline Ashton on his bewildered imagination. The future rose to his mental vision as one interminable, dreary, comfortless track of wretchedness : he felt the iron of Despair entering his soul ; and whilst, on one hand, the wily demon presented to him a picture of the misery of existence,—on the other, he

softly whispered the relief to be obtained from withdrawing from it.

“ Is not short payne well borne that brings long ease,
And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave ?
Sleep after toyle, port after stormy seas,
Ease after war, death after life, doth greatly please*.”

For a moment, smarting under the anguish which had overpowered his mind, as well as his body, Mr. Mordaunt listened to the soothing voice of the persuader : he was ready to rush from the house and throw himself into the Thames, or to pass a bullet through his head : but, fortunately, his mental integrity brought on the reaction which ensued ; his strength of reason, his moral principles, his religious convictions, returned, and they prevailed. He was resolved to face the man who, as he assumed, had blasted his hopes of felicity ; and to hear from his own mouth, and from the lips of Miss Ashton herself, the acknowledgment that she had transferred her affections ; and, if such was the case, he resolved accordingly to frame his purpose. All idea that she was under restraint had vanished. The simple circumstance of her having sung at Lady Mary’s party was to him a sufficient demonstration that she was a free

* Spencer.

agent: yet, Manvers had spoken of the melancholy which hung over her. These were contradictions which could be explained only by a personal interview with her; and that, at all hazards, Mr. Mordaunt was determined to obtain. Although appearances were against her: and although adversity had rendered him impatient under the wound which he believed had been inflicted by her hand, yet, he commanded enough of reason not to pass a judgment without decisive evidence. He had no malice to indulge; he felt no desire that revenge should triumph; he was suffering, bitterly, from circumstances over which he had no control—which he certainly had not merited: but of such is the world! How often do we behold sudden misery involve the best part of the species! Is there no recompense in reserve—no hope to which the dimmed eye may be raised—no beam of comfort to lighten the burthen of wretchedness which presses on the bosom of the undeserving sufferer? Certainly not in this world.

After the departure of the two friends, —tired with my own reflections, and almost sickened with the gloomy view of mortality which spread before me,—I took up my hat and strolled out, with the expectation of find-

ing at least something to dissipate my thoughts. The streets were crowded ; but I walked on, unheeding the dense stream of population in which I mingled ; and I scarcely knew where my steps were proceeding. I could not, however, shake off the melancholy train of ideas which the conduct of Miss Ashton had awakened in my mind :—a dark cloud seemed to hang over humanity :—the struggles—the disappointments—the woes of life—the mockings of the present at the anticipations of the past—the wreck of the best and purest affections of the heart—ever presented themselves, and would not be shaken off. I had, unfortunately, cause to believe that that portion of our species, whose perfections approximate nearest to those of angelic spirits, are nevertheless not devoid of guile. I had felt the poignancy of the wound which the falsehood of woman leaves in the heart it has stricken—the barb transfixed in the wound to exasperate the pain. Time and the balm of patience, it was true, had done something to mitigate the excess of my sufferings : but now I seemed doomed to witness its withering influence on another—one, too, apparently born for enjoyment—whose dawn of existence had been gilded with the warm rays of prospective happiness.

When woman suffers from the inconstancy of our sex, all the sympathies of our nature are justly called forth for her consolation and support. Why then should a similar fate in man awaken only sentiments of pity, as if that passion, which in its purity redeems our fallen nature, were only weakness in him? Mr. Mor-daunt cherished the sentiment in its utmost purity. Why then, in his case, did I ask myself, has the blush of the rose, which should have tinted every coming event, yielded place to the sombre hue of the nightshade? and although framed for the exercise of the gentler sympathies,—although of unsullied conduct as a clergyman, with elevated sentiments of the religion which he professes,—warm in his affections as a friend,—constant in his attachments,—adapted in all respects to bring happiness into domestic life,—yet, why is he a miserable man? Heaven only knows.

CHAPTER IX.

“ O, Time, too swift ! O, swiftness, never ceasing !
 His youth 'gainst age, and age 'gainst time hath spurn'd,
 But spurn'd in vain ; youth waneth by increasing :
 Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers that fading been ;
 Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.”

ESSEX.

I HAD ascended the steps and walked into the church-yard—if it may be called by such a name—of St. Andrew's, Holborn. What a difference between it and that which I had last visited ! In the one case, the repose of beautiful nature hung over the heaved turf, the narrow abodes of the dead : the silence of midnight, broken only by the distant murmur of the Tweed, like the stream of life, fretting over its channel ; the sacred ruins heightened in their solemn grandeur by the softened light of the moon ; all contributed to lead the mind into a train of reflections likely to mellow both the heart and the conduct : in the other—amidst the buzz of the restless crowd, in the busiest part of the most stirring city of the world, sur-

rounded by every thing artificial—no heaving turf spangled with dew,—not a single feature calculated to sympathize with the inner man—to excite contemplation either on passing life, or on the frail tenure of humanity.

A funeral was being performed at the time : the mock pomp of the nodding plumes, and the cold looks of the mantled mourners, ill accorded with the ceremony, which was hurried over in the most slovenly and indecorous manner ; whilst the bright sun of noon, vainly struggling to dispel the eternal mist which settles over the city, added to the feelings of disgust and dissatisfaction which had been raised. As I descended the stairs of the church-yard, these sentiments were not abated by observing multitudes, both men and women, entering into, and issuing from, a celebrated retail shop for spirituous liquors on the opposite side of the street. I stood for a few minutes to count their numbers ; during which I was most forcibly struck with the impress which the long-continued vice of dram-drinking had fixed on the countenances of many of them, recording, too distinctly, the tale both of their moral degradation and their broken-down constitutions. My fancy insensibly drew a vivid picture of the numerous and frightful procession of diseases issuing from that temple of inebri-

ation: Crime marching in its van, followed by Death, and the dark cloud of retribution hanging heavily upon its rear.

As I was meditating on this creation of the imagination, wondering at the multiplied forms under which misery, of man's own seeking, visits mortals in this world, I felt my arm gently grasped. I turned round; the individual who stood before me was a thin, pale, upright, soldier-looking person; his face, which bore traces of former comeliness, was a little disfigured by a sabre wound across the left cheek; and a cloth arm, suspended from a stump on the left side, was looped to a button of the coat. Still the face of the individual, his voice, and his military air, were familiar to me; there was something about him, however, which I could not recognize: the resemblance was only a faint outline of one who was no more. He grasped my hand warmly, and, staring me in the face, exclaimed, "is it possible, Doctor, that you have forgotten me? am I indeed so altered?" I gazed steadfastly on his countenance; he returned my fixed look with as penetrating a gaze: at length his features relaxed to a smile, that fascinating smile which could not be imitated, and which instantly brought the conviction of truth to my supposition. "It must be,"

I half muttered, "Camer—" "Cameron, in truth!" said he, taking up the word; "your old friend, arisen from the dead; and, after having despaired of ever seeing you again, to have so unexpectedly met you!" It was indeed the fragment of the manly figure of my friend that stood before me—altered in every respect but in his heart, where the same warmth of affection, the same genuine friendship, still glowed with all their original ardour. Had we not been in the street, I would have folded him to my bosom.

"Come, Doctor," said he, linking his arm in mine, "this is not the place for our gossip: let us adjourn to my lodgings. I am obliged, unfortunately, to leave town to-morrow morning; and we have more to tell one another than time will permit."

We had no sooner entered my excellent friend's apartments, and shut the door, than he threw his only arm around my neck, and, resting his forehead on my shoulder, gave vent to a burst of grief, which recollections, conjured up by our meeting, had revived. My heart also was full, and we stood for a few minutes silent, locked in each other's embrace.

"Excuse my weakness, Mac Alpine," said he, recovering himself. "Sit down, my ex-

cellent friend, and you shall know every thing which has happened to me since we parted."

We accordingly seated ourselves, and Cameron delivered the following narrative of his adventures.

"I need not recall to your memory, my dear friend, the circumstances attending the farewell of our long separation. The charge which the French curassiers made upon our Highlanders was nobly sustained; but I saw little of it; for we had scarcely mingled with the horsemen when I received the sabre wound across my face which has so disfigured me. I fell to the ground; and, in defending my head from a second blow aimed at it, my arm was fractured in such a manner as afterwards rendered amputation indispensable. Owing to the loss of blood, I soon fainted. I can only recollect the noise of the cannon, and the shouts of the charges, dying away as in a dream. How long I remained in this condition I know not; but when sensibility returned, I found myself lying beneath the bodies of two of my own men, and surrounded by others of my brave fellows who had fallen in opposing the charge. The pain which I suffered was great, and I groaned in agony.

"Night came on, and the light of the

pioneers' flambeaux flared over the field, and I was comforted with the hope of being soon carried off with the rest of the wounded, when one of the Jew harpies, the followers of the camp, came up, and instantly proceeded to cut off my epaulets. I implored him to inform the pioneers that I was there, alive, but severely wounded. He made no reply to my request; but threatened my life, if I spoke a word until he was gone. Thank Heaven! a Spanish gentleman, who resided in the neighbourhood of the field of battle, and whose curiosity had led him to traverse it after the engagement, passed at the moment: he gazed on me and on the plunderer for a few seconds; then, with an honorable feeling, darted upon the Jew and wrested the knife from his hand. The miscreant seized a sword which lay upon the ground, and made a plunge at my deliverer, who dexterously warded the blow, and closed with the Jew. As he was a powerful young man, the struggle was short: in a few minutes he gained possession of the sword and run it through the body of the scoundrel.

“ My deliverer knelt down beside me, and, in the most tender manner, enquired respecting my wounds and my feelings. He proposed to go and procure a conveyance to take me to the hospital; but I beseeched him not to leave me,

and to watch by me until the waggons, which were collecting the wounded, should come up. He did as I directed, and sat down close to me for half an hour ; when, a number of the camp followers and Jews approaching, he became alarmed, lest, on perceiving the dead body of their comrade, they should wreak their vengeance on him and me. He proposed to carry me altogether off the field, and then to take measures to procure my conveyance to the hospital. I had no sooner assented to his proposition than it was carried into effect. He rolled my plaid and his own cloak around me, and, lifting me in his arms, conveyed me out of the range of the plunderers, to the bank of a rivulet.

“ Although the pain of my wounds, which the night air had irritated, was great, yet my weakness was so considerable that I fainted ; and when I again became sensible, the morning had dawned, and I found myself lying under a tree, with my kind deliverer chafing my hands and temples.

“ Holy Jesu be thanked !” he exclaimed, on seeing me open my eyes ; and he continued, assiduously, his kind offices. The cold of the night had completely staunched the bleeding of my wounds ; but I felt stiff and pained in

every joint. I gazed on my deliverer:—every thing which had passed since I was struck down appeared to me as a dream: the peaceful repose which reigned around me; the gentle murmur of the stream; the early notes of the redbreast; the cawing of the crows wending afield; and the soft breeze of the morning; would have almost led to the belief that the battle, and all that occurred after it, was a fiction of the imagination, had not the anguish of my wounds and the presence of my deliverer demonstrated their reality.

“The Spanish gentleman, for such he was, to whom I owed my safety, was apparently about thirty years of age, tall and manly in his form; his features were expressive of benevolence, although large and marked; his complexion was a chesnut brown, and his hair black and clustering on his shoulders, as worn by the majority of his countrymen. He was evidently not a military man: he wore the dress of a Hidalgo—a green suit, closely fitted to his body, laced, with a black velvet cap, and untanned leather boots, wide at the top, and richly ornamented. You may readily suppose that I was not in a condition to note these particulars at the time; but such was his daily dress, and that which he then wore. I can never forget

his kind look, when I attempted to thank him for what he had done for me ; and on my requesting him to repair to the British head quarters and reporting my condition, that I might be sent for and conveyed to the hospital.

“ ‘ How can I leave you ? ’ said he, ‘ to the chance of being discovered and plundered, or even murdered, by those miscreants from whom I rescued you last night ? Every thing is now quiet, and the English army has evidently moved onward ; but, still, some of the camp followers may remain behind ; and although you are some distance from the field of battle, yet they may wander this way.’ ”

“ I endeavoured to persuade him that this was not very likely ; that the Jews would confine themselves to the field of battle, to pick up any thing which they had overlooked last night : and I therefore beseeched him to seek head quarters, and to obtain for me the assistance I required. He left me with reluctance.

“ He had scarcely departed, ere my thoughts turned to Perthshire. Although I could not move, and I was smarting severely under the pains of my wounds, yet, as my upcast eyes gazed upon the clear blue sky, across which the fleecy clouds of morning slowly floated, I

fancied it reflected from the mirror bosom of my own paternal lake. The trill of the robin, on the branch of the tree under which I lay,—the note of the linnet, flitting from shrub to shrub,—and the tiny horn of the bee, on his earliest excursion,—all conspired to support the delusion that I was at home; whilst the soothing, monotonous gurgle of the stream gradually lulled me to sleep; and I dreamt of my mother. Alas! I never saw her again!”

My excellent friend paused for a moment, to controul his feelings; and then proceeded.

“I was awakened from this happy slumber by the return of my unknown friend. He informed me that the army had advanced, and carried its wounded with it: but that he had brought a carriage to remove me to his own house in the neighbourhood. ‘There,’ said he, laying his hand upon my shoulder, ‘my sister and I shall be your nurses, and I will seek out the most skilful surgeon in the district to attend to your wounds; and—Jesu, Marie—you shall again join your countrymen, sound and well.’ I shook my head; but, whilst I thus indicated my doubt, and my opinion of my danger, my mind clung to hope; an instinctive feeling that I should recover seemed born at that moment; and what we desire, we believe.

The kindly manner in which the Samaritan intentions of this stranger were announced, quite overcame me—I wept like a boy.

“ I suffered much from the removal, and was scarcely laid in the comfortable bed to which I was conveyed, ere fever came on, accompanied with delirium, which rendered me insensible to every thing passing round me. I lay for ten days in this condition.

“ I awoke, at length, to a consciousness of my situation, and was surprised to find myself in bed, in a comfortable apartment, and a lady sitting at a small table, embroidering. My astonishment was extreme, as I could not recollect how I had got there. The battle, and the fact of my being wounded, were fresh in my memory; but my ideas respecting all that had subsequently happened were confused and unsatisfactory. My attendant, who did not perceive that I was awake, and that I had raised myself upon my arm, was a woman between twenty and thirty years of age, tall and graceful, with a fine Spanish contour of countenance, and jet black hair, braided upon her forehead, and rolled upon the back of the head, in that Grecian fashion which is so becoming in the Castilian ladies. Her dress, which was of rich black velvet, indicated her condition to be above

the middle rank of life ; and, through the sedateness and repose of her features, as she sat intent upon her embroidery, there was an expression of benevolence and sweetness calculated to interest.

“ ‘ Senora,’ said I, addressing her in Spanish, ‘ will you inform me where I am ?’

“ She started on hearing my voice, and instantly rose : and, having regarded me for a few seconds, she replied :—‘ Senor, you are in the house of my brother, Don Pedro de Saldanho. He has left you for a short time, to snatch a little sleep, and has requested me to watch by you. I will call him, Senor—’ and she immediately left the room. In a few minutes, however, she returned. ‘ He is gone out,’ she said, in a voice which was music to my ear—for it was that of female sympathy ; and who, in distress of mind or of body, has not owned its witchery ? ‘ Can I do any thing for you, Senor ?’ continued she, advancing towards the bed, and casting upon me the most benignant smile : ‘ my brother will be so rejoiced that you are better.’

“ I stretched out my emaciated arm : she knelt down beside the bed, and, having crossed herself, took my hand between both of hers.—

“ ‘ It is much less feverish,’ she half whis-

pered—‘ much cooler, than it has been ; yet I fear you are in pain somewhere, Senor—you groaned so piteously as you slept.’

“ ‘ I am sorry to trouble you,’ replied I ; ‘ but my mind is confused ; I know not how I came here : tell me, lady, how it is.’

“ ‘ Do not think of it at present,’ responded she ; ‘ you shall know all by and bye. How can I relieve your sufferings ?’

“ I gazed in her face, and tried to smile.

“ ‘ Your kind sympathy,’ said I, ‘ has already assuaged my pain. It is in my arm that I have the most anguish ; may I venture to request you to rub it ? I am sorry to impose upon your kindness.’

“ ‘ Mention it not, Senor,’ said she ; and she passed her delicate hand gently along my arm.

“ ‘ Nay,’ I hastily remarked, ‘ it is my other arm which suffers.’

“ She gazed intently in my face, with a look which seemed to enquire—‘ are you in earnest ?’ At length she replied—‘ Alas ! Senor, you have no other arm. Mortification appeared in your wounded arm soon after you were brought here ; it extended, and, two days since, the surgeons amputated it.’

“ As she spoke, my eyes fell upon the

stump. I had not previously been conscious of my loss ; and the pains which I experienced in that arm left me no reason to doubt its presence. At some other time, Doctor, you must explain to me the cause of this singular phenomenon.

“ In the mean while the Senora had risen. As I looked up in her face, I was struck with its loveliness ; her eyes were large, black, soft, and languishing ; the rich colour of health blushed sweetly upon her cheek ; and her mouth displayed that graceful curve ever ready to assume the smile, which, as it fascinates the beholder, expresses at the same time a consciousness of its own bewitching power. I forgot my pains as I gazed upon her :—it was one of those countenances which at once impress attention, and appeal to the heart. I was in the act of uttering my gratitude for her kindness, when her brother entered the apartment. A look of surprise and delight spread over his fine and noble features on observing the improved change in my condition.

“ ‘ By what magic, dear Rosalba !’ said he, has this improvement in our patient been effected ? Senor, I am delighted to perceive such an indication of recovery : but let me entreat you not to exert yourself in the smallest degree ; compose yourself to sleep ; your ex-

hausted strength truly requires it.' I was about to reply ; but he placed his finger on his lips to enforce silence ; and, after giving me a little liquid to moisten my parched tongue, and gently drawing the curtains, so as to screen the light from my eyes, he sat down by my bed, silent ; and Rosalba withdrew.

" I will not, my dear friend," continued Colonel Cameron, " weary you with details. Day after day, Don Pedro and his lovely sister watched by my couch, anticipating all my wants and ministering to my comfort. Must I confess that, deeply as I felt the debt of gratitude which I owed to my generous preserver, I often longed for the termination of the periods of his attendance, that I might enjoy that of his sister. There is—as you must well know, Doctor—in feminine kindness a healing balm which we do not find in the utmost attention and affectionate nursing of our own sex. It has been wrongly said that disease blunts the feelings, and that the heart of the sick man becomes as cold as the grave which is yawning to receive him. On the contrary, I maintain that the feelings become more sensitive ; a smile, a look, a word, vibrates upon the chords of our affection. But it is from woman that these kindnesses are experienced : the delicacy with

which every little office is performed, — the smoothing of the pillow, — the tenderness with which the head is raised, whilst the gentle hand presents the refreshing draught to cool the feverish lip, — the soft music of the voice which enquires into the wants of the sufferer, — the felicitous interpretation of his wishes, — the consoling smile which meets each expression of deep-felt gratitude, beamed even when the eyes are suffused with tears, and the bosom is labouring with the apprehension of impending danger, — are peculiarly the attributes of woman. It is not, therefore, wonderful, that, like the touch of the alchymist, the sympathy which thus awakens should occasionally transmute our gratitude into love. I felt its power: the daily, unremitted attentions of Donna Rosalba found a resting place in my bosom. I was unhappy in her absence; whilst her presence was ever to me as that of a guardian angel, filling my heart with hope, and alluring me from myself by giving an interest and an importance to the most trifling incidents which occurred.

“ Many weeks passed before I was able to leave my bed; and a few more ere I could quit my apartment. It was then that I became fully aware of the truth, that the happiness of my existence was closely interwoven with that

of my lovely hostess. The fatigue which she had undergone, and her long confinement to my sick room, had impaired her health; and for two days I was deprived of her society. Although nothing could exceed the kindness of Don Pedro—a kindness which could only be equalled by that of a fond parent, or an affectionate brother,—yet I felt desolate. I feared that his sister was worse than he stated: my imagination conjured up a thousand evils: I saw her suffering, and could not assist her: my mind reverted to the hours which she had sat by my side—to every incident that had occurred; happiness seemed to have departed from me, never to return; the sunshine which had cheered my anguish had given place to the clouds of gloomy anticipations and hopeless despondency.

“ It may appear singular that I had never asked myself the question, is it probable that a reciprocal sentiment can be awakened in the breast of one so lovely, for one so mutilated as I now knew myself to be? A fascinating instinct whispered to me that I was not indifferent to that bosom in which all my affections now centered; and I never doubted the probability of the suggestion.

“ The third day came, and Rosalba again

entered my apartment. Don Pedro had, a few minutes before, supported me to the window, and had left the room.

“ This was the first time I had looked upon the face of Nature since my confinement. The house of Don Pedro stood on a gently rising ground, in an amphitheatre of undulating hills, mantled with rich woods ; in one direction lay the vale of the late foughten field, the scene of my overthrow, and of the triumph of my country’s arms. The landscape rose before me like a fresh creation ; the sky was without a cloud ; the grass yet sparkled with dewy diamonds ; the limberest branch—every leaf, was motionless ; the breezes slept : it was a scene of calm pastoral repose, calculated for tender reminiscences and peaceful associations. To the reflective mind, the tranquillity which reigned presented, indeed, a most forcible contrast to the noise, the turmoil, the rage, which so lately deluged with blood the distant vale, upon which I now gazed.

“ ‘ You are admiring our rural landscape, Senor,’ Rosalba remarked, as she approached, unperceived, to the spot where I stood.

“ The sound of her voice startled me :—I attempted to turn round, but my enfeebled knees sunk beneath me, and I almost fell to

the ground. She upheld me in her arms, and led me tottering to my chair. In thanking her, I could not avoid expressing, warmly, how much I had suffered from her absence. She blushed deeply; and we both sat silent for some minutes.

“ ‘ Your voice, Rosalba,—pardon me for addressing you familiarly,—Senora Saldanho, your voice,’ I repeated, ‘ reminds me of one who is dearer to me than life.’

“ She coloured as I uttered the words, and then became pale as ashes. I can scarcely describe the idea which instantly shot across my mind, and led me, as it were, to explain my expression.

“ ‘ It was of my mother,’ I resumed, ‘ that I was speaking; one whose feelings are congenial with your own. Would to Heaven she could know how deeply I am indebted to your generous sympathy! How erroneous is the opinion that we learn nothing, in our progress through life, but the knowledge of evil! At almost every step I have found something to love: even the sufferings of war have brought me acquainted with you and with Don Pedro.’

“ ‘ You owe us nothing,’ replied she, looking down as she spoke; ‘ we have only done our duty as Christians. Tell me,’ she con-

tinued, changing the conversation, ‘ something of your country, and your mother. I long to hear of one who so completely engrossed your thoughts, during the delirium of your fever.’

“ I described to her Perthshire, and my beloved parent.”—

Here the voice of my friend faltered, and he paused.

“ Alas! Doctor, I have since that time seen my poor mother only in my dreams. The report of my death, which had reached her, brought her to the grave. Well!—I submit—it was the will of Providence.

“ To proceed:—My recovery being now almost certain, Don Pedro set off to the English head quarters, to report that I was alive. Books, the conversation and the guitar of Rosalba, with the sweet accompaniment of her voice, gave wings to the hours; my strength increased apace; and, before the return of Don Pedro, I was able to walk out, and to ride for a short time.

It was after one of these excursions in the neighbourhood;—the evening had set in, and the new moon was just beginning to shew her pale, slender crescent, like a broken ring, in the sky; the air was balmy, and the soft breeze bore upon its breath the fragrant odour of the

rose. I was standing, with Rosalba, at a window which looked over the vale, describing the beauties of my native glens,—the craggy faces of the rocks, mantled with the oak, the mountain ash, and the delicate birch,—the pure crystal of the streams,—the roaring torrents,—the dashing cataracts,—and the spreading lake, reflecting from its mirror the frowning mountains which embosom it in deep and awful solitude. If my enthusiasm heightened the picture, my imagination was still more excited by the breathless attention of my lovely auditor.

“ ‘Are the Scottish maidens,’ said she, looking down as she made the enquiry, ‘as beautiful as their land is romantic?’

“ ‘They are fair and faithful,’—was my reply.

“ She sighed, and remained silent.

“ ‘They have not,’ continued I, ‘the warm temperaments and glowing imaginations of your countrywomen: their love is pure, like the welling spring which issues from their native rocks:—it is not ardent like that of the Castilian, whose love is the lava stream, that almost consumes the bosom which it warms.’

“ She smiled at the simile, and a blush overspread her face and neck.

“ ‘Tell me,’ said she, hesitating,—‘are all your countrymen as romantic as you are?’

“ ‘ All mountaineers are romantic,” replied I ;—“ even the natives of your own Sierras have the same high and lofty sentiments which characterize the inhabitants of all mountainous countries.’

“ ‘ But theirs is not the tender poetry of romance which you possess. I have listened until I long to visit those glens which you have so eloquently described. Alas ! there is no chance of that wish ever being realized. But I shall dream of them when you are gone ; and I shall speak of them too.’

“ She was silent for a minute, and then continued—

“ ‘ Your heart is in your glens, Senor : you will return home and forget Spain. Cold as your maidens are, there is perhaps one—’

“ She paused ere the sentence was finished, and again blushed deeply. I almost instinctively essayed to take her hand : with the simplicity of a child, she placed it in mine.

“ Must I, my dear friend !” said Cameron, “ continue the details of what followed ? Must I attempt to embody in language what can only be felt ?—Need I say that from that moment my felicity was permanently sealed ?—That my heart, which had previously pulsated merely with filial affection, which cradled only the image of my beloved mother, now expanded

to enshrine an idol,—on whose altar was deposited the bond of my future destiny. I need not say to you, Doctor, who have looked so deeply into the source of human feelings, how much the sentiment to which I have yielded has brightened every prospect in life; and with what longing I look forward to that moment which shall unite me with Rosalba, in the endearing bands of mutual affection and indissoluble wedlock.”

I could not avoid smiling inwardly at my friend’s romantic enthusiasm. His love was hallowed; it was the *φλόγη* of Homer, all sweetness, felicity, prudence, and wisdom. It would have been cruel to cool his ardour—diabolical to mock his faith: but, I could have told him how painfully I had learnt the truth, that fidelity is a dream, and reliance on the love of woman but baring the bosom to the steel of disappointment. A woman should be “pure as the eye of heaven*.” But, alas! how often, even in the married state, do flattery, wealth, title, the desire of conquest, personal vanity, conspire to undermine, and even succeed in storming the citadel of female constancy.

The mind of a woman should be filled with the love of her husband, her aspirations for

* Jeremy Taylor.

a return of his affection should be ardent,—her bosom sacred as a temple, into whose secret no stranger has a right to enter; yet, how often is the soothing unction laid to the soul, that Platonism is not vice! Dare I continue the picture?—the matrimonial bonds are gradually loosened; jealousy, doubt, mistrust, often hatred, are engendered; and the remainder of life is a scene of struggle and wretchedness.

“They that enter into the marriage state,” says one of the soundest divines* that ever graced the English Episcopal Bench, “cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity.” But perhaps I have gone too far. I have no right to draw a general conclusion from my own particular case. The anticipations of my friend in the affection of Rosalba were unlimited; it is but justice to say that he was not disappointed†.

Colonel Cameron continued his narrative.

“Don Pedro returned from the camp, and brought to me Sir Arthur Wellesley’s approba-

* Jeremy Taylor.

† The phillipics which the worthy Doctor has scattered through his Diary against the fair sex are to be referred to his early disappointment; the history of which, however, must be told on another occasion.—EDITOR.

tion of my conduct, with a permission to return home, until my health was fully established.

“ Week after week passed on : my strength became so much improved that I thought of joining without taking advantage of the indulgence to return to England : but, although day after day was fixed for my departure, yet still, Rosalba found some reasons for delaying it, and I fondly yielded to her arguments. Her happiness was to me the first object in life : and well it might be ; for, as she was untainted by that desire for admiration and conquest which society engenders in the female breast, she wished and sought for nothing but love ; and she enjoyed it, in all its genuine purity, from the object who had awakened the sentiment in her bosom. Undeserving as I knew myself to be, I knew that I was beloved ; and Rosalba was to me the sun of my existence. But the moment was near which was to separate us for a time ; and, at length, it came.

“ You may readily imagine the melancholy which the separation so near at hand impressed upon the family group. Rosalba and I had much to say to one another ; yet, she seemed particularly to avoid the opportunities which presented themselves during the day : there was about her manner an embarrassment which was unusual, and which perplexed and distressed me.

“ As the day closed in, she proposed a walk to a noble terrace, which her brother had formed on one of the neighbouring hills, commanding an extensive view over the vale, and which had been our favourite resort. The evening was one of those so frequent, towards the close of summer, in Spain. The sidelong rays of the descending sun had fringed, with the richest gold, a light curtain of purple clouds which hung over the western horizon ; a balmy breeze, freighted with the rich perfume of the orange blossom gently fanned the meadows, and rippled the surface of a little lake, along the margin of which our path lay. A group of villagers were dancing under the shade of a wide-spreading chesnut-tree. We stopped for a moment to look at them. Among the group was a young couple who had been only a few days united.

“ ‘ How handsome Margarita looks !’ I remarked to Rosalba, who hung on my arm ; ‘ and what fond glances pass between her and Jachiamo, as his eye follows her graceful movements in the dance ! There is a felicity in the attachment of that humble couple which makes poverty almost enviable.’

“ Rosalba sighed :—she said nothing, but she gently drew me from the scene.

“ We sat down on a seat, on the terrace, which Don Pedro had ordered to be made

for me in the early days of my recovery. For a few minutes both of us were silent:—at length, Rosalba—her eyes fixed upon the ground—took my hand—

“ ‘ My dearest friend,’ said she, ‘ I have a communication to make to you, which involves the happiness of both of us ; but I cannot summon courage for the task.’

“ She lifted her eyes to my face: they were swimming in tears, and her bosom heaved with the most violent agitation.

“ ‘ My Rosalba ! my beloved Rosalba !’ replied I, folding her to my breast—‘ what have you to say which cannot be confided to me ? what is it, my beloved ?’

“ She buried her face on my shoulder, and sobbed aloud.

“ ‘ O ! could I be spared this trial !’ she exclaimed ;—‘ could I be spared !—but it cannot be.’

“ Imagining that her distress referred to our separation, I endeavoured to sooth her, by mentioning how soon a few months would pass away ;—in protesting the ardency of my love, and its unalterable character. She again raised her head, and gazed in my face for a few seconds.

“ ‘ It is not the thought of our separation, painful as that is—no—it is not that,—dearest

Cameron ! which now labours in my bosom—no, no—it is—but—’

“ Here nature and affection overcame the modest reserve which she had always maintained, even in our most confidential moments ; and, flinging her arms, passionately, around my neck, she exclaimed—

“ ‘ I know, my dearest Cameron !—I prize—I confide in your constancy—I judge you by my own heart—you are to me every thing, and must ever remain so : but—when you return—’

“ Her bosom seemed torn by the deepest suffering ; she struggled with it ; and, after a convulsive sigh, continued—

“ ‘ When you return—when I again see you—the first, the only being that my heart has devotedly loved,—when you expect this hand to seal the bond of our mutual affection—how—O ! holy Virgin, support me !—how can I pronounce the sentence ?—it cannot be yours !’

“ ‘ Rosalba !’ I exclaimed, starting up, as she disengaged her arms from my neck—‘ what do I hear ?—recall these words.’

“ The words which she had spoken seemed to have again restored her self-possession. She took my hand, bathed it with her tears, and then, with a firmness of voice which astonished me, entreated me to be seated, and to listen to her.

“ ‘ It is proper, my beloved friend !’ said she, ‘ that you should know something of our family ; but its history involves a subject which is distressing almost to think of ; the details of which are of a nature which has made me shrink from them ; and, even now, were it possible, I would gladly avoid laying them before you. But, alas ! my dearest Cameron ! told they must be ; for, although my affections can never change, although my love can only terminate with my life, yet I fear the events which I have to narrate to you will place an insurmountable bar to that union which is the ultimate bond of congenial affection.’

“ As she spoke, I felt my blood run cold in my veins ; my imagination could not conjure up any idea of what her mysterious language implied ; I sat like a statue, scarcely conscious of existence. She quickly observed the effect which the few sentences she had already uttered had produced ; and, laying her hand upon mine, with a look the most cheering, sweet, and affectionate, she proceeded :—

“ ‘ Believe me, my dearest Cameron ! that these fatal words, which have evidently overpowered your feelings, refer to nothing dishonorable either in reference to myself or to my dear brother. But a deep and indelible injury has been

inflicted on our family honor—by one of your countrymen. We live in an unfeeling and a harsh world ; and, until this stain is removed, I cannot become a wife—not even to you, in whose bosom my heart reposes, and who are indeed to me more than life.’

“ ‘ Conceive, my dear friend, the load which this acknowledgment removed from my breast. I again breathed free ; and I felt only the most ardent desire to hear the nature of the injury, and to ascertain the possibility of my being able to remove the evil.

“ ‘ Tell me, my beloved Rosalba!’ said I, ‘ without the smallest disguise, the extent of the injury, and tell me the name of the individual who has inflicted it.’

“ ‘ You shall know the whole,’ responded she, ‘ except the name of the person. It is your discovery of that which I have feared, and which has forced me to remain silent on the subject, until it would be criminal to preserve silence longer. But, Cameron ! I cannot—I must not—I dare not mention the name of that man who has rendered my family wretched.’

“ It was in vain to urge the matter ; I therefore permitted her to proceed.

“ ‘ My father, Don Pedro de Saldanho, was a man of considerable wealth, accumulated from

successful mercantile speculations at Cadiz : my mother was of a noble family, whose proud bearing would not permit her to marry a plebeian, in which light my father was regarded. His affection soon settled the objection : he retired from business, and purchased the ample domain which my brother now possesses ; and, having obtained his wife, he lived partly here and partly at Madrid, where his great wealth introduced him to the society of the noblest families in Spain. His health, however, was infirm ; and, soon after my birth, he died ; leaving my mother with one son (my amiable brother), and two daughters. My mother still continued the custom of residing for a part of the year in Madrid ; and as her own family now countenanced her more than during the lifetime of my father, as soon as my sister arrived at the age of womanhood, she was introduced into the society and all the gaieties of that dissipated capital. I was but a girl, and my brother was still at Toledo, pursuing his philosophical studies, when the troubles of Spain commenced, and the French intrigues and arms placed the brother of Napoleon upon the Spanish throne. My mother retired to Badajoz, to the house of one of my maternal aunts. We were in the place when it sur-

rendered to the French ; and, as we were not afterwards allowed to leave it, we were also in it when it was recaptured by the British and the Portuguese troops.'

" ' I was present at the siege,' said I.

" ' There is a gentlemanly bearing,' continued Rosalba, ' a manly sincerity, a reserved gallantry, in British officers, which ensure confidence in the propriety of their conduct, and which have always gained for them a ready admittance into the domestic circles of my country. Among those officers who found a welcome in the house of my aunt, was one of high military reputation ; a man who, although on the verge of fifty, yet was singularly handsome in his person, very highly accomplished, and extremely fascinating in his manners. He spoke Spanish with the purity of a Castilian : he drew exquisitely—had a rich vein of poetry—was passionately fond of music—and possessed a voice which gave richness and interest to any instrument which he touched ; and they were few, indeed, which were not familiar to his hand. He was fascinated with the beauty of my sister, who was as accomplished, in some respects, as himself ; and, ere long, a reciprocal attachment existed between them.

" ' Had you seen my unfortunate sister, my beloved friend, you would never have turned

an eye upon me. She was tall, beautiful, of the most perfect symmetry in form, and graceful in every movement. Although her deportment was dignified and grave, yet it was devoid of the smallest trace of pride:—there was a sweetness and fascination in her countenance which could not be looked upon without, at once, kindling sentiments of affection and love.

“ ‘ My mother observed, with some degree of anxiety, the growing attachment between Rosina and your countryman ; and she was determined, in order to break it off, to try to send her away. Something intervened to delay the execution of her intention: the British officer soon afterwards was ordered from Badajoz, to join the army ; and—oh ! Cameron ! how can I speak the words?—my sister was missing.

“ ‘ When the first burst of astonishment and indignation was over, my poor mother endeavoured to console herself with the idea that a private marriage had been effected. Conceive her horror, and the depth of her degradation, on learning that that was not the case: that your countryman was a married man. It was true that he had separated from his wife ; but that did not alter the atrocity of the case: the stain inflicted upon the honor of the family could not be wiped out. My brother was too

young to be called upon to resent it ; besides, he was an only son ; and much of my poor parent's anxiety was to conceal from him the event. She pined inwardly, and soon sank a victim to sorrow.

“ ‘ On the recall of my brother, after my mother's death, the noble-minded boy swore to avenge the dishonor of his family, even in the centre of the British army ; and he left Badajoz for that purpose. His heroic intentions were frustrated ; the officer had been sent home, wounded, with dispatches ; and my unfortunate sister had fallen the victim of a fever, brought on by mental suffering, and an unavailing sense of degradation.’

“ ‘ Alas !’ said I, ‘ it is too common a case.’

“ ‘ Peace be to her spirit ! Holy Virgin !— I pray for its repose ! We believe that the chancery of heaven is not filled with criminal accusations and expiatory records, but with beneficent acts of forgiveness. He, who intercedes for us, knows the infirmities of our nature ; and, as we rely on his love, we also believe that the throne, at whose footstool the intercession is pleaded, is radiant with the beams of mercy ; and that these are the lights of heaven.

“ ‘ Since that time,’ continued Rosalba, has Dishonor, like a spectral form, ever ap-

peared at my side. Nevertheless, singular as it may appear, I loved my sister passionately ; and, whilst I felt deeply the disgrace which her conduct had brought upon the family, I grieved to think that Providence had not permitted me to see her, to have convinced her that even crime cannot chill real affection ; and, in her dying moments, to have awakened her soul to repentance, and to rely for intercession, for forgiveness, on that bosom, which is a fountain of mercy, the bosom of the Holy Virgin. Alas ! her last look rested upon a stranger, although the partner of her guilt. But she is gone for ever ! and a sense of the degradation which still hangs over her family has driven me to an act which must render me for ever wretched.’

“ Rosalba here gave vent to a burst of grief. I endeavoured to comfort her, and urged her to explain to me the cause of her wretchedness : but, for some time, she answered me only with tears ; and seemed labouring with her internal suffering : at length she said—

“ ‘ In a moment of misery, when pouring out my afflictions at the altar of the Holy Virgin, I bound myself by a solemn oath never to give my hand in marriage to any one, however my heart might be engaged, who would not wipe out the injury inflicted upon the family honor

by the blood of the spoiler. Oh ! my beloved friend ! I would give the world to be able to recall that hasty and inconsiderate vow ; but it is registered in heaven—it cannot be withdrawn. I trust Providence will forgive the feelings which rung it from me : but I loathed life—every moment was one of misery. I thought it was impossible to forgive.’

“ She covered her face with her hands, and again wept bitterly—sobbing as if her heart would burst.

“ ‘ Be comforted, my dearest Rosalba !’ said I, relieved from a load of doubt and suspense ; ‘ inform me who the villain is, and I swear never to see you again until your vow shall be resolved.’

“ ‘ Spare me—O, spare me !’ replied she, passionately, ‘ from complying with your request. I know your bold and determined spirit. Can I expose you, whose life to me is far more precious than my own, to the hazard of a personal conflict, even with the author of our misery ? No, my dearest Cameron ! we must part ; but our hearts will remain united. You must leave me to the fruit of my folly. I shall never change. My maiden heart shall never admit any other impression ; and I shall sink into the grave, grateful to Providence for

the short period of unalloyed felicity which I have tasted since we met.'

" I was overpowered by the generosity of these feelings ; and for a few minutes we both remained silent. I knew it would be vain to endeavour to obtain from Rosalba the name of the scoundrel who had given such a fatal blow to her peace of mind ; and as, in my own thoughts, I determined to procure, if possible, the information which I wanted from her brother, I did not urge my former request ; but assured her of the sincerity and unalterable character of my devoted attachment, and of the reliance which she might place upon its fidelity.

" The moon had by this time risen, and its placid light fell upon the face of Rosalba:—it was pale, and full of anxious thought. As her eyes met mine, a slight blush spread upon the cheek ; but it instantly disappeared, and her downcast eye was again fixed upon the ground.

" ' I know,' said she, ' you will not betray the confidence I have reposed in you : my only happiness in life shall be in knowing that I am beloved. I know well the extent of the felicity which I am throwing from me. I witnessed in my own parents the happiness of a congenial union—the reciprocal sympathy which sweetened every event of life—which soothed the sor-

rowful, and rendered the pleasurable brighter:—thoughts the most confidential communicated, and that confidence appreciated:—the love of each for the other the soul of their existence; and each regarding the other as comprehending the whole relationship of life. I sigh for such felicity; but it is not to be my lot: my hand cannot be yours whilst my vow hangs over me. I never will place you in a situation to resolve it—no—never! Let us return.’

“ I endeavoured once more to gain the name of the destroyer of her peace of mind. I beseeched her to soften her sentence—to give me at least hope.

“ ‘ Listen once more, my truly beloved,’ she replied; ‘ my heart is wholly, unalterably yours; but I shall never divulge a name, the knowledge of which might prove fatal to you. Do not solicit me again.’

“ This sentence was uttered in a calm voice; and, placing her arm in mine, we walked in silence to the house. How I then longed to realize the dreams of astrology, that I might read the future in the stars which now shone out so brilliantly: but they were a sealed book to me.

“ It is unnecessary, my dear friend,” continued Colonel Cameron, “ to weary your

patience with more details. You may conceive the nature of our parting, and the feelings with which, on the following morning, I left the house of Don Pedro. The anguish of my mind was somewhat alleviated, however, by the fact, which I had drawn from Don Pedro, that the seducer of his sister was Colonel Atkinson. You know him ; one of the most distinguished of our cavalry officers ; but a man notorious for his gallantries and libertine principles. A ray of hope fell upon the future ; and I resolved, as soon as I had seen my mother and arranged my affairs, to seek Atkinson throughout the world, and to wipe off the stain which he had inflicted on the family of my Rosalba, or to fall in the attempt."

How singular, thought I—for I purposely refrained from mentioning the circumstance to Cameron—how singular that I should have witnessed the death of this unfortunate lady ; and that the individual, whom my friend now sought to call to an account for his libertinism, was the husband of the unfortunate being whom he had rescued from the Serpentine, and in whose fate he had felt so deeply interested. The circumstances which threw Atkinson and Cameron together—namely, their services in the Peninsula—had prevented me from informing

him that Atkinson was the man whose cruel conduct had driven that unfortunate woman to desperation ; and now, by the most singular coincidence—the inscrutable ways of Providence—he was about to inflict upon him that chastisement for another delinquency, which he would long before have attempted, had he been aware that he was the author of the wrongs of that unhappy woman.

Cameron had not yet informed me that he had met with Atkinson ; but I suspected it, from the singularly gay spirits which my friend now assumed, the peculiar curl of his lip, and the expression of triumph in his eye, the well-known harbinger of some exulting communication which he was about to make. I could almost read his thoughts ; his looks were like the light ripple on the wave before a storm—certain indications of a coming change of doubtful issue. How singularly do men deceive themselves on such occasions ! they appear to tempt fate : calculating with certainty on the penalty of the event for which the satisfaction is demanded being paid by their opponents ; overlooking altogether the probability of the blow alighting upon themselves.

CHAPTER X.

Laertes. ————— in my terms of honor
I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation.

HAMLET.

“ THERE are some injuries which can only be settled by a duel.” So says the world ; that is, the fashionable portion of the west end of the town, if we live in that part of the metropolis ; or some three dozen of families, if our lot of life be cast amongst the county aristocracy. I shall not stop to enquire what these injuries are ; and I will admit that the feelings of a man may be wounded in the tenderest point ; that all which has shed happiness upon his path of life may be for ever destroyed by the act of another ; and that, as there are no other means of remedying the evil in the present state of society, a man is naturally tempted to redress himself. But there is one absurd ingredient essential to this mode of redressing an insult—the placing the offending party, who is to expiate his guilt, in such a

situation that the punishment is as likely to fall upon the individual who is injured as upon himself. But admitting, with Dr. Paley, who makes the foregoing remark, that the offender is sure to suffer, I would again enquire, in his words, “in what the satisfaction consists?—or how it tends to undo the injury, or to afford a compensation for the damage already sustained?” This is undoubtedly the only rational mode of viewing the question. Nevertheless, it may be demanded, is a man to suffer patiently under the yoke of insult,—to be shunned by his equals, and pointed at as a coward by the world? Undoubtedly not, I reply: without a fair reputation, this world is a scene of disgust, and life is a loathsome burthen. But will a duel, even when the offender falls, heal the wound inflicted on the affections of an injured husband?—will it restore peace of mind to a family whose sister has been ruined?—will it justify a base imputation, which has been propagated by scandal?—or, will the satisfaction which is demanded, and which is given by a duel, lighten the guilt of the adulterer or the seducer? Certainly not. In what, then, does the beneficial influence of duelling consist? It may be replied, that it prevents the frequency of insult; preserves

the decorum of society ; and mitigates the pain of an injury by the sweetness of revenge.

So far as the prevention of insult and the preservation of the decorum of society are concerned, I fear duelling has done little: few men wantonly insult others; and, when an aggression of this description is the consequence of unrestrained temper, the dread of a duel never occurs to the mind of a passionate man. In those cases, again, where the injury has been of a nature to intrude upon the peace and happiness of a family, neither the termination of a duel in the death of the offender, nor any apology which he may be compelled to make on the ground, if he live, can restore that peace which his misconduct has wrested from it.

The modern duel is a relic of the joust to the utterance of chivalric times. Although one or other of the combatants was doomed to die, yet the joust to the utterance was often undertaken on the most frivolous pretences; it was frequently a vain display of prowess. A modern duel is as often a more silly conceit of being fashionably notorious. The duellist yields to what is termed the law of honor,—a law existing only for a certain part of society, and the essence of which is extreme revenge.

The idea that the dread of a duel tends to

preserve the decorum of society, is to suppose that the majority of mankind are cowards, and politeness and civility unnatural habits, and that the fetters of fear are necessary to chain down the natural evil dispositions of our race.

In the days of chivalry, when love and war were the business of life ; when the blood of the noble ones of the earth was supposed to differ from that of the ignoble ; when kingdoms were considered as mere chess-boards, and their subjects regarded as the instruments of the game, played by the few gifted with divine authority ; when even the awards of justice were settled by the sword ; when every moral duty was discharged by the chance of battle, and the voice of conscience stifled in the loud peals of triumph, as the successful combatant set his heel on the neck of his prostrate foe, and received the award of his prowess, accompanied with the approving smile of his “ ladye love :” then it was not wonderful that reputation, merited or unmerited, should be maintained by an appeal to arms. But disrobe chivalry of its equipments, its golden spurs, its nodding plumes, its emblazoned shields, its silken pennons streaming on the wind, its glittering armour, and the scarf thrown over it by the hand of beauty :—remove the gorgeous

ornaments of the lists, the array of heraldic insignia, the bright eyes which gaze upon the combat to adjudge the meed of victory ;—the floating harmony of martial music, mixed with the brazen notes of trumpets, and the shouts of excited spectators ;—what is it ?—what, but a scene of authorized murder and of brutal triumph !

Happily, the sun of Christianity has arisen upon the benighted world, and shed the light of its benign influence far and wide ; for, although, by the wiles of a crafty priesthood, chivalry was the offspring of a union between religion and arms :

“ The fine vocation of the sword and lance,
With the gross aim and body-bending toil
Of a poor brotherhood, who walk the earth,
Pitied ;* ”

Yet a different sentiment now influences mankind ; and the triumph of war is the peace and repose of the world.

To the last argument in favor of duelling—namely, that consolation is derived from revenge, by one smarting under the sting of an injury—it may be replied, that, although the natural feeling of all animals, from the worm up to man, is to repel injury for injury ; and

* Wordsworth,

although it is almost as natural to foster that spirit which glories in the humiliation of an adversary; yet, by the influence of religion, this truth has been gradually forcing itself upon the minds of men—that “the forgiveness of others is the condition upon which alone we are to expect, or even ask, from God forgiveness for ourselves:”—a doctrine calculated to diffuse goodwill, peace, and love, among the human race,—to smooth the rugged paths of life, and to shed over them the beams of felicity.

On these premises, there can be little hesitation in pronouncing that the practice of duelling is detrimental to sound morality; involving two crimes—namely, suicide and murder; and only justifiable by the respect paid by a certain portion of mankind to the “unauthorized laws of honor,” which “create exceptions to divine prohibitions.”

Such are my ideas of duelling: they are given devoid of any consideration for the opinions of society, or, as it is termed, the world, to which our judgment is too frequently narrowed, and our ideas of good limited.

But, my friend having been nearly all his life in the army, and being educated to respect the refinements connected with points of honor, on

which military men pride themselves, these were not likely to be his opinions. His affections, besides, were involved in his pledge to seek out Atkinson, and to inflict vengeance upon him for the wrongs done to the family of his Rosalba.

Although gentle as a child, yet Cameron was high-minded, valiant, and imbued with all the pride of feudal times. With as much romance as ever warmed the bosom of the most ardent knight, the object of his affection was truly the idol of his heart; his confidence in her love was unbounded; his own constancy was also that of another age; Rosalba was ever present to his imagination—she was the only sun of his world. His idea of love, indeed, was that of Sir Gruélan:—

“ The pure influence of immortal mind ;
Chaste union of two hearts, by virtue wrought,
Where each seems either in word, deed, and thought ;
Each singly to itself no more remains,
But one will guides, one common soul sustains*.”

Its dominion over him was absolute; the inclination of the object of the sentiment was his law. It is not wonderful, therefore, that, with such intenseness of feeling, and such elevated

* The Lay of Sir Gruélan.

generosity of soul, my friend should adopt, as his own, the quarrel of the family of Saldanho. No knight ever perilled himself with more delight, in the cause of woman, than my friend Cameron in that which he had undertaken. His homage was not so much to the beauty as to the virtues of his love : her image was ever blended, in his fancy, with the purity of heaven ; and to efface any stain upon it he regarded as a duty, hallowed by the cause. Such were the sentiments of my friend :—but it is time to terminate this digression, and to proceed with his narrative.

“ I did not become acquainted with the death of my poor mother,” continued Cameron, “ until I returned to England ; and, having arranged my affairs, the loneliness of my home would have soon driven me from Perthshire, had I not accidentally learned that Atkinson was in the West Highland. I sought for him eagerly in every part of my native country, not excepting its most solitary wildnesses, but without success. I resolved, therefore, to return to England ; and, as I was setting out from Edinburgh, information reached me that he was in London, having run away with the niece of a military officer, who, with his friends, was travelling in the Highlands.”

I smiled, and, to the amazement of my friend, related to him all that I knew of that transaction.

“ Well,” continued he, “ you will soon find him ; for I encountered him yesterday in a coffee-house. He informed me that he was under a bond to keep the peace in England, having challenged an officer who had insulted him ; but that he was going to Ghent, and would meet me there. He admitted the injury which he had inflicted on the Saldanho family ; an act of his life of which, he affirmed, he had most sincerely repented ; and that, although, as an officer and a gentleman, he could not refuse to meet me, yet he never would return my fire.”

“ Under such circumstances, how will you proceed ?” enquired I. “ The extraordinary vow of Senora Saldanho, and your pledge to accomplish its object, place you in a most awkward position. If you shoot Atkinson, after he affirms that he will not return your fire, you will place yourself in the situation of a murderer : if he do not fall, your pledge to Senora Rosalba will be unredeemed.”

Cameron was struck with the remark, and remained for a few minutes in thought.

“ I cannot now resolve the difficulty,” said

he ; “ but proceed I must to Ghent. I have an engagement at two o’clock ; and, as the time approaches, I must say good bye.”

We both rose ; and, having left his lodgings together, and walked as far as Cavendish Square, we shook hands and parted.

I found Outlands at the Clarendon, and communicated to him the information which I had just received. We agreed to go to Lady Mary’s party, to which we had been invited, and, on our return, to communicate with Mordaunt, and take measures for our immediate departure for the continent.

“ How the plot of our adventure deepens !” said the Advocate.—“ I have the warmest regard for Mr. Mordaunt, and feel an unaccountable interest in the pursuit we are engaged in ; but I fear it will end tragically. Well, we must be prepared to face it. Shall we meet at dinner ? Adieu !”

He left the hotel, humming the Scotch air,

“ There’s naught but care on every hand.”

’Tis too true : if our bosoms are free from its corrosion on our own account, we take into it the misery of others. What difference does it make ?—None.

CHAPTER X.

" Oh, will this state of tossing agony
 No termination have ? Send out, I pray thee,
 Another messenger."

JOHANNA BAILLIE.

IT was one of those cool, clear, autumnal mornings, which are truly invigorating; the sky was cloudless; and the sun just sufficiently high to silver the gothic pinnacles and decaying towers of the ancient city of Bruges; when an English party issued from the Hotel du Commerce, and, traversing the now almost desolate streets of that once celebrated, rich, populous, and powerful capital, embarked in the treck-schuyt on the grand canal for Ghent. The party consisted of the Veteran and Mrs. Standard, Aunt Bridget and Miss Standard, Mordaunt, Oatlands, and myself.

Mordaunt had been disappointed in his endeavours to find out the lodgings of Atkinson;

and still more so, in not meeting the Colonel and his daughter at Lady Mary's party. The depression of spirits into which he was thrown, by these events, rendered him truly an object of pity. He felt, as he afterwards informed me, as if an unrelenting fate was undermining the citadel of his feelings ; he shuddered in thinking that he had almost lost his reliance upon that overruling Providence which had hitherto supported him ; and he became reserved and irritable. The eagerness of Miss Standard to alleviate his suffering, and her unremitting attentions with this view, were the only circumstances which could draw from him any expression of satisfaction, or lighten up his countenance with a transitory smile. She had reached London, with her family, on the evening of Lady Mary's party ; and, as we determined to proceed to Ghent on the following morning, the family of the Veteran embarked with us in the steamer for Ostend : we had arrived at Bruges on the evening of the day before that on which our re-embarkation in the treckschuyt for Ghent took place.

The boat was crowded, and presented specimens of all nations and characters. Beneath the awning on the deck, besides our own party, were Italians, French, Germans, Flemish, and

several groups of English ; the latter displaying, as usual, that exclusiveness which is the most striking national feature in the habits of our countrymen abroad. Among other characters, in this motley assemblage, were three Béguines, whose placidness of manner and singularity of dress strongly arrested the attention of the Advocate, who had never before met with any of these devout women. One of them spoke English fluently, and readily entered into conversation with Mr. Oatlands.

“ I believe,” said he, after having made several enquiries respecting the order, “ that there was a Protestant Nunnery at Gedding, in Huntingdonshire, in the time of Charles the First, whose rules closely resembled those of the Sisters of St. Béghé : they were even at liberty to leave the institution, if they were inclined to marry.”

“ That society,” replied the Béguine, “ was more rigid, in many respects, than ours : like them, however, we observe a middle course between the monastic and the secular condition : we have rules for our government both in and out of the Béguinage ; but we are bound by no vows ; and many of us are supported from our own funds.”

“ Do you frequently travel ?” continued

the Advocate, who seemed desirous to draw forth the observations of the holy woman upon secular matters.

“ There are few places in Holland, Germany, or France, besides Belgium,” replied she, “ that I have not visited. Our order neither enchains the mind nor the body: the more we can observe human character, in all its varieties, the more likely are we to be fitted for administering to the comfort of the distressed: and that is one of the objects of our institution, without reference to country or religion.”

“ A noble object !” rejoined Mr. Oatlands. “ In your travels,” continued he, “ had you time to turn your attention to works of art? What is your opinion of the comparative value of the galleries of Antwerp and the Hague ?”

“ They do not admit of comparison,” said she, her face brightening up as she spoke, and its look of austerity completely vanishing. “ The Antwerp gallery contains a few of the finest paintings of the Flemish school, and one which I may venture to assert is unequalled in the world. I refer to the portrait of the Burgomaster Nicolas Rockox, by Reubens. The colouring is that of life: the head speaks; and the hands are not less expressive of vitality

than the countenance. . . Painting could proceed no farther ; it is the glory and triumph of the art : indeed, Reubens seems to have been inspired in working upon that picture ; for its companion, the portrait of Adriana Perez, the wife of the Burgomaster, is inferior to it in many degrees. In the gallery at the Hague, however, every picture is the first of its class. What do you think of the Madonna, with the infant Jesus, among the specimens of the Spanish school ?”

“ It is,” replied Oatlands, “ in my opinion, the finest picture in the collection. What an air of melancholy sweetness is breathed over the countenance of the mother !”

“ And the Bull of Paul Potter ?” continued the Béguine, smiling as she put the question.

“ The sign of the Red Cow !” replied the Advocate : “ it is, in my opinion, inferior to his smaller pictures. The mere portrait of a young bull, as large as life, has no interest ; whereas the grouping of his cattle, and the accompaniments, in his smaller pieces, constitute the great merit of Potter’s works. I prefer the little piece in which a cow is represented admiring her shadow in the water, to the larger picture, much as it is celebrated.”

The Béguine nodded her assent, and smiled.

I was forcibly struck with the expression of her countenance at this moment. It reminded me of that of Mrs. Standard in her better days ; but the beauty which still beamed through features beginning to display traces of advancing age, and which evidently had been altered by anxiety and care, if not by sorrow, was of a higher description than that lady's had ever been. Mrs. Standard at this moment came forward : the Béguine gazed intensely in her countenance for a few seconds, and then, remarking that a bell, which was ringing, was the announcement of dinner at the table d'hôte, she and her companions descended into the cabin.

“ That is a remarkable woman,” said the Advocate ; “ I shall endeavour to gain her name, and to meet her again at Ghent.”

“ She has been beautiful,” remarked Mrs. Standard ; “ but the expression of suffering, so strongly depicted on her countenance, tells at once the cause of her entering into the religious order to which she belongs.”

Mordaunt sat apart on the side of the gay treckschuyt, as it glided between the high banks which bound the canal on its approach to the city of Ghent. The light discourse of the passengers ; the notes of the guitar, accompanied by the full, mellow voice of an Italian gentle-

man, who was politely amusing the voyagers under the canopy; even the loud laugh of a group of young Irishmen, who had found the table d'hôte excellent, and the wines generous; were incapable of rousing the Clergyman from his melancholy feelings. He spoke to nobody; and, indeed, his depression seemed to gain a firmer influence over him as he approached the spot where it was likely his anticipations would be confirmed or refuted, his felicity or his misery sealed. His memory recalled a long succession of events, which, although veiled like a

Dim and shadowy vision of the past,
Seen far remote, as country which hath left
The traveller's speedy step,

preyed upon his spirits, and threw a kind of hopeless obscurity over the future. Miss Standard approached him, and endeavoured to divert his attention, by directing it to the few objects which the confined borders of the canal presented:—the rows of abels, the purple spiked loosestrife, the flowering rush, and the gay shrubs embellishing the banks on each side;—the water lily, opening her spotless blossoms to the noonday beam, whilst the wave, dashed from the prow of the boat, curled up or bathed her broad green leaves, floating like a mantle

on the surface of the water. He smiled, and turned his eye to the objects ; but, immediately afterwards, again sunk into his reverie.

As we approached the ancient capital of Flanders, and the banks between which the treckschuyt proceeded had become so elevated as to shut out every object not in the line of the canal, Oatlands was amusing Mrs. Standard and Aunt Bridget by an imaginary description of the surrounding scenery, when a vista of the tower and the steeples of the city was brought into view by a turning of the canal, and excited general attention. The three Bégunes, who, like the rest of the Belgians, had remained after dinner in the cabin, came upon deck ; and the one who spoke English, on overhearing the satirical description of Oatlands, ventured to offer a few remarks in support of the beauty of the country, which she supposed he was vilifying.

“ You are mistaken, sir,” said she, “ respecting the country round Ghent. It is not a district of romantic glens and rugged mountains, like Scotland, of which I presume, from your accent, you are a native : but it is rich in cultivation, well wooded, displays features of the most tranquil prosperity, and possesses many picturesque scenes, notwithstanding its flatness. The fertility of the soil is equalled

only by the industry of the peasants who cultivate it, and who are not only contented, but placed far above that penury which is so conspicuous in many other countries. Of its wealth in horticultural productions you will be able to judge for yourself, if you shall visit the green and fruit market during your sojournment in our ancient city."

Besides the correctness of the remarks, there was something in the delivery of them, and in the manner of the Béguine, that again forcibly arrested the attention of the Advocate; and which induced him to explain to her that his remarks were merely playful, and intended solely to amuse, and fill up the time whilst passing so slowly between the high banks of the canal, where there was little to interest the eye.

"My friend, Mrs. Standard," continued he, "requires my sportive nonsense to rouse her spirits."

The Advocate had scarcely pronounced the name, ere the Béguine started and turned pale: but, immediately regaining her self-possession, she drew her white coif, which she had unfolded and was wearing in the manner of a hood, more closely round her face, and fixed her eyes steadfastly upon Mrs. Standard.

“ And Madame,” said the holy sister, “ is she also from your beautiful land of romance ?”

“ No,” replied Oatlands ; “ romance can scarcely be said to have yet reached the extended prairies of her native soil.”

The Béguine became again pale as death, staggered, and would have fallen, had she not sunk upon one of the benches behind her. Oatlands sprung to her assistance.

“ You are ill, I fear, ma mere,” said he ; whilst Mrs. Standard presented to her a vinegarette.

“ *Quelque peu des vertiges, Monsieur,*” she replied ; and immediately added—“ but they will pass away.”

Her hand shook as it held the vinegarette ; and a minute elapsed before she was able to raise it to her nostrils. She kissed the box on returning it to Mrs. Standard ; drew closer her coif, sighed, and sat for some minutes silent, with her eyes fixed upon the deck. Aunt Bridget, Mrs. Standard, and Oatlands, exchanged looks, which seemed to say—“ what can this mean ?” None of them had seen any member of the order of St. Béghé before ; and they were at a loss to divine why the holy sister should be so much agitated without any evident cause. Mrs. Standard, now, introduced her

daughter to the Béguine, who took her hand, gazed earnestly in her face, then gently kissed her forehead, and requested her to sit on the bench beside her.

“ If you have not visited Ghent before,” said she, addressing Miss Standard, and still retaining her hand, “ you will be amused with the antiquity of the city, which was originally the capital of the Pays Bas ; our narrow streets, our bridges and canals, will interest you. Mademoiselle must see our belfry, the cathedral, and the gallery of Monsieur Scamp.”

“ May I enquire,” said Miss Standard, “ whether you are a native of Ghent ? Your English is not that of a Foreigner.”

“ I am not a Gantois,” replied the Béguine, sighing deeply, and looking intensely in the face of her auditor ; “ but I am a Béguine. You must, *ma chere !* visit the *grand Béguinage*. The order of St. Béghé is not a cloistered order, a closet nunnery ; it consists of various grades of sisters. I am one of those who are permitted to wear the habit, without actually being under the strict rules of the Béguinage : my life is spent in works of charity, in visiting and administering consolation to the sick, and in prayer.”

“ It is an arduous, but praiseworthy course

of life," said Miss Standard; "but," continued she, "not one which many young persons are likely to adopt."

"*Pardon, Mademoiselle!*—in the Beguinage you will find women of every age, cheerful and happy."

"Do they never repent the course of life which they have chosen?" enquired, again, Miss Standard.

"I cannot venture to answer that natural question," replied the Béguine. "The younger sisters affirm that they do not: the elder speak enthusiastically of the consolations which they experience. The occupations of the younger sisters often divert their attention from corrodings still rankling in the bosom: the duties of the elder prevent them from dwelling upon unpleasant retrospects. The religious labours of both, if regarded as acts of penitence to atone for the frailties and imperfections of our nature, afford, in the Christian graces which the obligations of our order impose, the comfort which is promised to the penitent—'the quiet of contentedness, the rest of peacefulness, and the blessed sweetness of spirit that is in meekness and humility*.' You must visit me at the Béguinage, and judge for yourself."

* Jeremy Taylor.

“ For whom shall we enquire ?” said Miss Standard.

The Béguine hesitated for a few moments ; a cloud of sad recollection seemed to pass over her ; and a tear stood in her eye.

“ I am known,” she then replied, “ as *La Sœur Patience* ; but, my dear young lady, that is not my real name.” On saying which, she sat silent for a few minutes ; then, gently pressing the hand of Miss Standard, she rose hastily, and entered the cabin.

“ There must be something singular in the history of that woman,” said Miss Standard, addressing her mother.

“ She is evidently a gentlewoman,” rejoined Mrs. Standard ; “ her manner, her conversation, equally betoken superior intellect and breeding. We may, perhaps, learn something of her history when we visit the Béguinage.”

As this conversation was proceeding, the vessel reached the point of its destination ; and, having exhibited their passports, and run the gauntlet of the porters, the clamorous puffers of the various hotels, and the trucks which are always waiting the arrival of the treckschuyt, the party entered the ancient capital of Belgium. The narrow streets ; the antique and grotesque architecture of the houses, their high

gable ends rising like steps ; the canals and their numerous bridges ; particularly attracted the attention of Oatlands, who put a thousand questions to a young Gantois, who had offered his services as a guide to conduct the party to the Hotel Royal, in the Place d'Armes ; the porch of which we entered just as the dinner bell was summoning the inmates to the table d'hôte.

Every Englishman, who visits Belgium for the first time, should be informed that, if he wish to fare well, he must dine at the table d'hôte. No private dinner, however excellent the hotel may be in other respects, will satisfy our countrymen. The Flemish are pieces of clock-work ; every transaction for the day is arranged in the morning, and timed ; and nothing that has not been anticipated is welcome, even when profitable : therefore, nothing out of the usual way is ever well done.

The Veteran, who was an experienced traveller, and was fully aware of this, consequently hurried the toilettes of the ladies, and ushered the whole party into the *salon à manger* before the soup had disappeared.

Among the individuals seated at the table were two Belgian officers, who soon entered

into conversation with the gentlemen of our party, and displayed all that polite attention to the ladies which so peculiarly characterizes well-bred military men. One of them, a fat, rubicund-faced, handsome man, with moustaches, which Aunt Bridget pronounced to be the only truly becoming appendages of the kind which she had yet seen disfiguring the human face, directed his discourse chiefly to Miss Standard, and described the objects most worthy of the attention of the traveller. As he was speaking, the hour was struck by a very loud and deep-toned bell, and immediately followed by the air of Malbrook, chimed from some tower or steeple.

“These chimes,” said the *Gros Capitaine*, an appellation bestowed by Miss Standard, in defect of the real name of the handsome Belgian, “are in the belfry tower. You must ascend it, *Mademoiselle*, to-morrow: it is upwards of six hundred years old, and commands a most interesting view. You can form no idea of Ghent, unless you see it from the belfry tower.”

“Are there any remains of Philip van Artevelde in Ghent?” enquired Miss Standard.

“Several,” replied the *Gros Capitaine*:

“ the gilt dragon on the top of the belfry was one of his trophies at the capture of Bruges, under Baldwin, Count of Flanders.”

“ It was from that tower,” said Oatlands, “ that Charles the Fifth, punning upon the name of the city, asked Alva—‘ Combien il falloit des peaux d’Espagne pour faire ce Gant ?’ ”

“ Oui, Monsieur, c’est vrai ; it is an old story.”

“ Are there many English at present in Ghent ?” asked Mr. Mordaunt, who had scarcely before raised his eyes.

“ No, not many—very few,” replied the handsome officer.

“ Do you know if a Colonel Atkinson be here ?” continued Mr. Mordaunt.

The two Belgian officers looked at each other, repeating the name At—kin—son, slowly, as if to recollect ; after which the *Gros Capitaine* replied that he had heard the name, but he did not know the Colonel. A gleam of satisfaction beamed on the countenance of Mordaunt: he looked at Oatlands, but remained silent.

“ Where is the Grand Béguinage ?” said Mrs. Standard, addressing the Belgian officer.

“ Not half an hour’s walk from the hotel,

Madame. Would you like to go to vespers there this evening? I shall be proud to conduct your party. 'The assemblage of the sisters in the church is an interesting sight.'

The proposition was immediately accepted; and at seven o'clock we entered the walls of the little town which constitutes that singular nunnery.

The first object of the ladies was to enquire for Sister Patience. They soon found out her habitation; on the door of which was the name of *St. Ursula**; but the Sister was not at home. Their curiosity, however, was gratified by a view of the house. The kitchen and refectory, in particular, interested them. In the latter, the ascetic habits of the sisters were strikingly illustrated: each sister cooks her own food; and the arrangements of the refectory were such, that, although many dine in the same apartment, yet each dines alone. The room was furnished with a number of small buffets, in the shelves of which were arranged plates, cups, and various articles for cooking; and, below each buffet, was a board which drew out to form a table, at which the owner of it dines, with her back turned upon her neighbours.

* On the doors are inscribed, not the name of the tenant of the house, but of some saint, its supposed protectress.

On leaving the lodging of Sister Patience, it was curious to observe the nuns crowding to the church, each walking alone, disregarding the others, and apparently unconscious of their presence. As they crossed the area between their lodging houses and the church, their white veils were carried upon their heads, folded up in a square form, like a napkin; but, on arriving at the porch of the church, they were unfolded, and then formed into a kind of hood, which almost concealed the face.

The whole of the sisters, amounting to more than six hundred, were seated, and the chanting of the vespers had commenced, before we entered the church. We were disappointed, however, in finding that the chanting was confined to two or three voices in the organ gallery. The obscurity of the church—for the day was rapidly closing in, and the only lights were the candles on the altar, — the black dresses of the sisterhood, contrasted with their white veils, and the various attitudes of devotion which they individually assumed, impressed a deep interest on the scene.

The nuns occupied the whole of the centre of the church, except a few who separated themselves from the main body, and approached to the altar, around which the strangers were

seated. Amongst the Béguines near the altar, I thought that I recognized Sister Patience ; but the hooded veil so concealed her face, that there was no opportunity of verifying my conjecture. I perceived, however, that she whom I suspected to be our late fellow traveller eyed the party with most intense interest ; and, until the *salvé* was sung, her devotions seemed to occupy little of her thoughts. As soon as the service ended, I crossed the platform with the intention of addressing her ; but she had already vanished among the crowd of the retiring sisters. The ladies again enquired after her at her lodgings : she was not there ; and why she should thus shun the interview, which she had solicited, I could not explain.

We returned to our hotel, much pleased with the ceremony, although Oatlands and Miss Standard were equally disappointed in not meeting with Sister Patience. *Le Gros Capitaine*, however, in our walk home, entertained us with many anecdotes of the sisterhood and their good works.

On retiring to my room, I could not avoid reflecting on the singular position in which matters now stood. It was almost certain that Atkinson was in Ghent, and it was very probable that Cameron was also there. That a

duel would take place, there could be little doubt: it was also probable that any interposition of mine, with a view to hinder it, would prove ineffective. I turned the subject, however, over in my mind; and I resolved to find out Cameron, and to accompany him to the field. My object was, if possible, to prevent either party from firing; but the difficulties which presented themselves were almost insurmountable; they crowded round me like those in a voyage of discovery, when rocks and shallows appear on every quarter, and when the course must be kept against opposing winds and currents, with no land-marks to steer by, or to lessen the peril. What was to be done? The reply was a problem, which I could not solve: after pondering upon it to no purpose, I went to bed, and dreamt of a shipwreck.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Man’s angry heart, inspected, would be found
 As rightly set as are the starry spheres ;
 ’Tis Nature’s structure, broke by stubborn will,
 Breed all that uncelestial discord there.”

YOUNG.

I CANNOT guess how the case stood in Judea ; but in Belgium the assertion of the Rabbins, that woman took nine of the ten measures of garrulity which were sent down to mortals, is completely disproved. There the donation is at least equally divided between the sexes : our new acquaintance, *le gros Capitaine*, was a demonstration of the accuracy of my opinion.

“ He is a most agreeable man,” said Miss Standard, after our return from the Grand Béguinage ; “ but he talks so rapidly, and so incessantly, that I could not get in a word.”

As I was descending to breakfast, I encountered him upon the stairs, returning from

parade, in full uniform ; his comely person set off to the best advantage.

“ *Bon jour, Monsieur !*” said he : “ how are the ladies ? I hope you have slept well ? Can I be of any service to the party to-day ? Apropos ! I have heard that Colonel Atkinson is at the Hotel des Postes. I shall be happy to conduct you there, after I have disencumbered myself of these trappings, and have taken a cup of coffee : *le veux tu bien, Monsieur ?* I shall be ready at half-past nine.”

As he was obliged to pause for my reply, I repeated “ half-past nine,” accompanying the words with a nod of assent ; and then, darting down stairs, entered the *salle-à-manger*. The Veteran and the ladies were already there, and breakfast was on the table. In a few minutes afterwards, our handsome Belgian also was seated near us, with his roll and his cotelet before him ; and he continued talking fluently during the whole of breakfast time, between each sip of his *café-au-lait*.

Mordaunt had not yet appeared ; and, as I was anxious to have an interview with Atkinson before the discovery of his residence should be made known to our friend, the minutes seemed to pass tardily until *le gros Capitaine* finished his repast. I then ventured to remind

him of his promise to conduct me to the Hotel des Postes.

“ *C'est pour moi un grand plaisir,*” replied he, rising; and, most goodnatureedly drawing my arm within his, we walked out. Our inquiries at the hotel confirmed the Captain's information that Atkinson was residing there; but we were told that he had gone out at seven o'clock that morning. I asked if Miss Atkinson was at home?

“ She went out, only five minutes since, with *la Sœur Patience*, a Bégueine,” replied the waiter.

“ *La Sœur Patience?*” said I, as if uncertain of the name.

“ Yes, sir,” rejoined the waiter; “ the pious Sister was sent by the Colonel to shew the young lady some of the sights of the city.”

“ It is a custom,” interposed *le Capitaine*, “ when young ladies visit Ghent, if their fathers or brothers be occupied with business, to procure one of these devout ladies to chaperon them in their walks through the city.”

“ It is a singular coincidence, however,” thought I, “ that Sister Patience, whom we had met in the treckschuyt, should be selected for this purpose.” I could not help considering it as one of those destinations of Providence

which occasionally occur for good, when mortal efforts prove abortive. I remained, however, silent, although a thousand conjectures passed through my mind as we retraced our steps across the Kauter; and I scarcely heard the remark made by my voluble companion on the *tristesse* of Monsieur le Curé, as he styled Mordaunt; and the advantage of a trace of melancholy in the clerical countenance.

On entering our hotel, we found the whole party equipped for a visit to the cathedral and the belfry; and as I was still anxious that Mordaunt should remain ignorant of the information which I had obtained respecting Atkinson, I was not sorry to find that some private business would prevent *le Capitaine* from being our cicerone on this occasion.

Ghent may be regarded as the Manchester of Belgium, and although the number of persons employed in the cotton manufactories is still considerable, yet the streets present much of the same deserted aspect as those of Bruges. I was amused with the parallel, drawn by the Advocate, between the fantastic gable ends, the height of the houses, and the narrow streets and passages, and those of the old town of Edinburgh: but he was forced to admit the superiority of the Belgic city in the number

and the beauty of the scrolls and ornaments which decorate the buildings.

The cathedral of St. Bevan, into which we soon entered, is not only the most ancient, but the richest in point of decoration, of all the sacred edifices of Belgium. The high altar, with the statue of St. Bevan, carved by Verbruggen, arrested the attention of the whole party, on entering the church ; whilst the fact of the candlesticks having belonged to Charles the First, and having been sold during Cromwell's protectorate, did not escape the Advocate ; who took an opportunity of descanting on the meanness of republicanism to Mrs. Standard. The Sacristan, who conducted us through the church, pointed out the arms of England which still remain upon these candlesticks.

Mordaunt paid little attention to the numerous monuments, the pictures, and the other works of art, which surrounded us on every side.

We had paused before the celebrated production of Henry and John Van Eyck, which is more spoken of by travellers than actually prized for its merits—a singular circumstance, if we consider the period at which it was painted, and its intrinsic value as a work of art.

“It is true,” said Oatlands, whose taste was critically correct, “as Joshua Reynolds remarked, that the figures are painted in a hard manner, and the perspective is defective; still the execution is of a character worthy of the immortality to which it is undoubtedly destined.”

Whilst the Advocate was uttering this opinion of the merits of this celebrated painting, I had turned round to ask the Sacristan a question respecting it, when my attention was attracted by a kneeling Monk, whose beautiful head and countenance presented a study fitted for Van Dyke, or for Rubens. His face was pale; but the features were exquisitely moulded, and strongly expressive of superior intellect, as well as that earnest contemplation which bespeaks the soul completely withdrawn from the world, and elevated far above the vanities and transitory enjoyments of this life. Not a muscle moved; the eye was bent upon a figure of our Saviour with a fervent intensity, and the hands were crossed upon the breast: it was, in truth, a breathing personification of the most abstract devotion.

A young lady and a Béguine, upon whose arm she was leaning, were regarding the kneeling Monk with an interest equal to that which riveted my attention; but I was so absorbed

in the Monk that I scarcely looked at them. They moved onwards at the moment that Mordaunt and Oatlands had turned round, at my solicitation, to look at the Monk. The eye of Mordaunt, however, was not directed to the Monk; it followed the females as they passed down the long aisle, whilst his colour alternately came and went.

“It must be!” said he, thinking aloud; and, then, turning to me, he remarked, that if he could judge of any one by figure and gait, independent of face, he was certain that the young lady was Caroline Atkinson: yet, with this impression on his mind, he stood as if rooted to the ground. With more self-possession, Oatlands walked rapidly after the parties; and in a few seconds we all followed. The two ladies had, however, issued from the porch of the cathedral; and before Oatlands reached the street, not a vestige of them was perceptible.

The information which I had received at the Hotel des Postes left no doubt on my mind of the truth of Mordaunt’s conjecture: but I was not sorry that it could not be generally confirmed at this moment. The agitation which this disappointment produced on him may be readily conceived: he looked truly wretched

and ill; and, as he proposed returning to the hotel, I determined to accompany him, and to leave the rest of the party to finish their inspection of St. Bevan's, and to ascend the Belfry.

As we were crossing the Kauter, I perceived *le Capitaine* standing in the porch of the hotel. He soon saw and walked towards us.

"I have just heard," said he, "that Colonel Atkinson has fought a duel this morning with another Englishman of the name of Cameron, and that he is mortally wounded."

Mordaunt looked at me, and then eagerly enquired whether the Captain had heard where Colonel Atkinson lived, and whether he had a daughter with him. I interrupted him, and stated that I already knew all these particulars; and proposed that we should immediately proceed to the Hotel des Postes.

The crowd in the street indicated that something uncommon had occurred; and we learned that the wounded gentleman had been carried into the house not a quarter of an hour before our arrival. On entering the hotel, the landlord informed us that the municipal authorities were there; and, that his orders were to admit no stranger to the apartment of Colonel Atkinson. It was in vain that Mordaunt urged our

admission, and that I stated my acquaintance with the Colonel ; the landlord was firm to his trust ; and we were on the point of retiring, when I thought it probable that we might procure some information through Cameron, if he was still in Ghent. I enquired, therefore, if the master of the hotel knew where that gentleman resided.

“ He lives here,” was the reply ; “ and he is now in Colonel Atkinson’s apartments.”

“ Send to him,” said I, “ this card ; and let him be informed that I am here.”

The landlord hesitated for an instant, then took the card up stairs. In two minutes he returned and ushered us into the room. Cameron met us at the door.

“ This is, indeed, Doctor,” said he, taking my hand, “ a most providential visit ! I was thinking of you at the moment that your card was presented, and wishing that I could convey you here ; for I have no opinion of Belgian surgeons, and I fear this unfortunate case will require all the skill and attention that can be bestowed upon it.”

I gazed steadfastly in my friend’s face for a few seconds without speaking. He quickly read in my look what was passing in my mind.

“ I perceive,” continued he, “ that you are

reflecting upon the singular incongruity that a man will not hesitate to attempt the life of another, and yet, immediately afterwards, he shall be the most anxious to save it. But do not prejudge me ; the blow by which Atkinson fell was not given by my hand."

Mordaunt, the eager expression of his countenance indicating the intensity of his curiosity and desire to hear what had occurred, now exclaimed—

"What then has happened?"

"Walk to the other end of the room," said Cameron, "and I will tell you the whole affair. Those gentlemen, who are seated at that table, are the municipal authorities ; the two friends who went out with us are detailing to them the circumstances which took place."

There was a calm, collected manner in my friend, which, coupled with his assertion that the blow was not given by him, puzzled me. We walked to the further end of the room, and, being seated, Cameron delivered the following narrative of the unfortunate event.

"I was in Ghent two days before Colonel Atkinson, who, on his arrival, took apartments in this hotel, where I already had fixed myself ; so that we met before he had been three hours in the place. He mentioned to me that he

expected an old brother officer to act as his friend ; but, as he had not arrived, he anticipated no objection on my part to postpone our meeting for eight and forty hours. I assented ; and, last night, I received a note, stating that, as his friend had not yet arrived, he had met with a Belgian officer who had kindly agreed to accompany him ; so that, not to keep me longer in suspense, he should fix our meeting for this morning. In a postscript to his note, he added,—‘ I have one favor to ask ; and, from my knowledge of your character, I feel secure of your acquiescence : it is to solicit your friend Major Stevenson, should I fall, to convey my poor daughter to England, and to place her under the protection of her uncle, Colonel Standard, who is now most probably in Edinburgh.’

“ Doctor !” said Cameron—his voice faltering as he spoke,—“ I know that you will not deem it affectation in me, when I assure you that this postscript completely unnerved me. I had seen Miss Atkinson : her beauty, the gentleness and the modesty of her demeanour, which shed an additional grace over her loveliness, and a trace of melancholy visible through all her efforts to please and to amuse her father, had deeply interested me : these qualities, you

know, are the certain means of reaching the heart. Her father, indeed, seemed to doat upon her. Need I say that the idea that she might be rendered an unprotected orphan by my hand, sent a pang to my bosom which no language can describe. I cursed the hour which gave birth to the rash vow that bound me ; and I inwardly prayed that the chance of the first fire might fall to Atkinson, and that I should have no power of returning it."

Mordaunt looked in the face of Cameron, whilst his moistened eye eloquently spoke the sentiments that were passing in his mind ;—and he pressed the hand of the generous soldier.

" You may readily conceive," continued Cameron, " the kind of night which I passed ; and also the feelings with which I left the hotel this morning. I was on the field at seven o'clock : Atkinson was also punctual to his time. Before measuring the ground, my friend, Major Stevenson, assured him that his wishes with respect to Miss Atkinson should be faithfully fulfilled. In thanking him, the resolution of Atkinson for a moment gave way ; but he immediately recovered his firmness, and requested the seconds to perform their duty. I thanked Providence, on being informed that the lots had decided the first fire to belong to

my opponent ; although I need not inform you that my thoughts, at that instant, were fixed upon the only being for whom I now regarded life worth possessing.

“ I waited to receive the fire of my opponent. Instead of firing, he regarded me steadfastly for a few minutes : he then advanced towards me, with his pistol reverted ; but, his foot tripping against a stone, the trigger, in his attempt to recover himself, was touched, and the ball instantly lodged in his breast. He fell, and we all ran to his assistance. He lay for a moment, stunned, and the blood oozing from the wound : but, rapidly recovering his presence of mind, he stretched out his hand towards me, and, with the utmost composure and firmness of voice, said—

“ ‘ It is well, Colonel Cameron !—it is the just retribution of Heaven !—it is right that this hand should be the engine of my merited punishment. I can only hope for mercy from —.’

“ He hesitated, and, without finishing the sentence, closed his eyes, whilst a tremor shook his whole frame. We all thought him to be dying ; but, on raising his head, and supporting his shoulders on my knee, he revived. We expressed our hopes that the wound was not

mortal. He looked at the Surgeon, who had accompanied him to the field, and who was then examining where the ball had entered.

“ ‘ I perceive,’ rejoined he, ‘ my fate is sealed ; the countenance of my friend speaks the sentence. It only remains, Colonel Stevenson, again to solicit your kind attention to—my,—’

“ His utterance once more failed : he seemed suffocated ; then was slightly convulsed ; and at length fainted. We concluded he was dead ; and, on consultation, it was agreed that we should remove the body into the Béguinage, which was close by, until such time as his daughter could be apprized of the event. The sisters readily admitted it ; and a mattress was brought into the refectory of the nearest lodging, upon which it was laid. To our astonishment, however, life was not extinct ; he once more opened his eyes, and, seeing three of the Béguines in the room, enquired where he was. On hearing him speak, one of these pious ladies approached close to the mattress, knelt down upon one knee, and, gazing steadfastly in his face, seemed much affected. She soon, however, rose ; and, addressing me, asked his name, and put a thousand questions regarding the unfortunate circumstances which had brought him there, and the causes of the

meeting. I replied as briefly as I could to her queries ; and, taking advantage of the sympathy which she displayed, I endeavoured to engage her to proceed to the hotel, in order to break the event to Miss Atkinson.

“ ‘ Is his daughter in Ghent ? ’ said she, putting an emphasis on the word daughter : and, as she spoke, she laid hold of my arm to support her from falling : the good lady’s feelings, indeed, were evidently completely overpowered on hearing that he had a daughter.

“ ‘ I will instantly go,’ continued she ; ‘ it is a melancholy duty which must be performed. I shall endeavour to take her out, until the wounded gentleman is lodged in the hotel. Let me beseech you, sir, not to move him too soon : sister Ursula will furnish you with every thing requisite for his comfort.’

“ She turned from me, and again gazed for a minute upon the face of Atkinson. There was so much sympathy in her look, that I expected to see the tears start into her eyes : indeed, it seemed to require a powerful struggle to repress her feelings ; and, for a moment, the issue seemed uncertain ; her powers of self-control, however, triumphed, and she hastily left the room.

“ Two hours nearly elapsed before means could be obtained to convey our unfortunate

charge to the Hotel. We were pleased to find, on our arrival, that Miss Atkinson was from home, the holy sister having succeeded in taking her out; and ten minutes have not elapsed since they returned. How the poor young lady has supported the appalling sight of her dying parent I have yet to learn: she and the kind-hearted Béguine are, at this moment, in the sick room."

Cameron had scarcely concluded his narrative when he was summoned to add his attestation to the deposition of the seconds. The attention of Mordaunt had been chained during the whole of the recital: he now raised his eyes, and, expressing his amazement at the circumstance which had so providentially rescued Cameron from the execution of his rash vow, he asked what was to be done? and whether, in his clerical capacity, I was of opinion that he could afford any consolation to the dying man?

"There can be no doubt," replied I, "that you may afford much comfort to poor Atkinson."

"Such is also my opinion," rejoined he; "the greatest libertine—the most wilfully blind, the most callous in vice, on whom no reformation can be wrought in health, and during the fulness of prosperity—is often brought into the

most opposite train of mind when death stares him in the face : the proud are then humbled ; the sceptic is convinced ; and every man feels, at that moment, that the finger of God has traced the law of conscience on his heart too indelibly to be effaced."

" But, my dear sir," added I, " you must meet Miss Atkinson before you can enter the room of her father."

" Undoubtedly," was his reply : " the only difficulty is, how to accomplish it."

I was resolving in my mind in what manner to proceed, when the Béguine entered the room. I was pleased to find that she was indeed *la sœur Patience*. The pious lady recognized us ; and, advancing, addressed Mor-daunt—

" You are come, sir," said she, " most opportunely ; our poor patient has expressed an ardent desire to see a clergyman of the Protestant faith : I have only left the room to send for one ; but, as I believe that you are a minister of that persuasion, may I solicit your assistance for him. I will lead you to the room."

" I had already thought," replied he, " to offer my services ; but it is essential that Miss Atkinson should be previously aware of my being here."

The Béguine eyed him from head to foot : it was one of those looks which speak volumes, although nothing is said. She concluded, however, her inspection with the single word—
“ Certainly.”

As she was leaving the room, I drew her aside and explained, as briefly as possible, the position in which Mr. Mordaunt and Miss Atkinson were placed towards one another. She expressed some surprise, but said little ; and promised to return after she had notified our being in the house to Miss Atkinson. In a few minutes she opened the door ; and, beckoning to us to follow, conducted us to the sick room.

In our way, she informed me that she could not prevail on Miss Atkinson to leave her father’s room ; but, from what she had seen of the young lady, she thought that she had strength of mind to sustain the meeting, without displaying that agitation which might alarm and distress her parent.

“ He already knows,” she continued, “ who Mr. Mordaunt is, and her sentiments respecting him : and he knows that he is here.”

The first thing which attracted my attention, in the dim light of the sick room, was the changed aspect of Atkinson. When I last saw him, in the

Peninsula, his cheek displayed the full flush of health ; his handsome figure—muscular, vigorous, and manly in its proportions, seemed capable of any exertion, whilst the beams of intelligence, which lighted up his countenance, demonstrated powers of mind equal to his physical energies. His figure, stretched on the bed, was now pale and emaciated, and bore evident traces of long corroding anxiety : it was plain that he was suffering as keenly in mind as in body, although his natural courage still struggled to repress the expression of both states of feeling. His daughter was kneeling at the side of the bed, embracing his right arm, which was stretched towards her, with her forehead resting upon it : whilst the Béguine, who had hurried to the opposite side of the bed, supported the head of the patient, to relieve his breathing, now oppressed almost to suffocation.

“ Doctor,” said he, whilst his hand was extended to take mine, and a transitory smile played around his lips, “ it is indeed kind of you to visit me : but my case is beyond your skill.”

He paused ; for even this short remark seemed to exhaust him. I placed my finger on his pulse ; it was quick, weak, and fluttering ; his efforts at relief by inspiration seemed

almost fruitless ; and, after a short cough, his head fell back upon the arm of the Béguine, who fanned him with her handkerchief. As he recovered, his eye lighted upon Mordaunt, who had advanced to the side of the bed, close to Miss Atkinson ; and then turned upon his daughter.

“ Caroline, my dear !” he feebly articulated, “ here is Mr. Mordaunt.”

The wretched girl raised her face, with a wild delirious gaze, towards her father for a few moments ; then, without turning her eye upon her lover, she again buried it in the bed clothes.

“ Mr. Mordaunt,” continued he, “ your presence has taken a load from my bosom : the severest pang which I have suffered has arisen from the idea of leaving my poor Caroline in the hands of strangers : but now—”

He paused from exhaustion ; and, although the Béguine moistened his lips with some wine, yet several minutes elapsed before he could proceed.

“ Mr. Mordaunt,” he continued, “ I know my daughter’s heart ; I entrust it to your affection ; you cannot too much prize the gift.”

The Clergyman, who was powerfully affected, bent his head, and applied his lips to the cold hand which was extended to him. Miss

Atkinson, whose look, when she before raised her face towards her father, expressed that peculiar character of delirium which indicates absolute despair and utter wretchedness, now sobbed aloud.

The unexpected approbation of her expiring parent to that union on which she rested her future hope of happiness, caused a transition of feeling, from the most poignant, overwhelming grief, to the tenderness of filial gratitude. The withering influence of the former had seared her heart to the core: its sensibility was awakened anew by the softening touch of the latter, and the feelings of the woman again flowed in their natural channel. After giving vent, for a few minutes, to a flood of tears, she seemed at once to have regained all her self-possession. She rose from her knees—gave her hand to Mr. Mor-daunt, and eagerly beseeched him to bestow that religious comfort upon her parent which his condition so imperiously demanded.

“ I am certain,” continued she, looking at the Béguine, “ that our kind-hearted and pious Nurse and Sister will not object to the predilection which we have for our own form of prayer.”

The Béguine bent her head in silent ac-

quiescence; but, after regarding the lovely girl, who had thus addressed her, for a few seconds, with a look of almost maternal tenderness—

“The heart,” said she, “unsophisticated by the errors of false philosophy, knows no form in addressing its Maker:—enlightened and purified by the beams of Christianity, and relying on the assurance which the atonement has afforded that its sincere aspirations shall reach the throne of the Eternal himself, the fountain of boundless benevolence and mercy, it matters little through what creed the supplications are made.

There was too much liberal feeling in this remark to admit of any dissent, even from Mr. Mordaunt; and it seemed to convey a ray of comfort to the dying sufferer, which the expression of his countenance clearly indicated. He clasped his hands together, and placed himself in a position to listen to the service for the visitation of the sick, which was now read in a subdued, yet solemn, tone of voice.

I was much struck with the mild, yet dignified, aspect of Mr. Mordaunt, as he earnestly pronounced the truths which this service contains. When he came to that emphatic passage, “I require you to examine yourself, and your state

both towards God and man," he paused, and directed his eye, with a steadfast but benignant look, upon the wretched man, whose countenance had become deadly pale, and tremulously convulsed; his arms had dropped by his side, a cold perspiration stood upon his forehead, and a suppressed groan of agonized thought burst from his bosom.

The Béguine, who had hitherto remained devoutly upon her knees, raised her head as the pause occurred. On perceiving the death-like aspect of the countenance of Atkinson, she uttered a shriek, rose from her position, and, with an agitation the most remarkable, enquired — "Is he then gone?"

I assured her that he had merely fainted.

"Thank God!" she then exclaimed; and, crossing herself, hastened to sprinkle his face with water, and to adopt those means of recovery which are well known to these pious women: but her whole procedure displayed an earnestness and an anxiety which seemed singular, and far beyond that which mere sympathy might have called forth.

Miss Atkinson, whose attention was also roused by the pause in the reading of Mr. Mordaunt, grasped her father's hand, and cast the most imploring look of inquiry, first at Mr.

Mordaunt, and then at me. I placed my finger, again, upon the pulse, and was about to assure her that the fit would pass away, when Atkinson heaved a deep sigh, and, slightly waving his hand, said, in a feeble voice, "proceed."

The service was scarcely concluded, ere the door opened and the Veteran entered the room. On perceiving him, Miss Atkinson rushed towards the old man and clung around his neck, whilst he fondly strained her to his bosom.

"I have taken the privilege of a connection, Colonel Atkinson," said he, "to enter your room, to offer my services in any way in which they can be useful."

The wretched man extended his hand, whilst a momentary gleam of satisfaction lighted up his countenance.

"You are, indeed, most welcome, Colonel Standard!" replied he; "we ought long since to have met: it would, indeed, have prevented many erroneous impressions from having been formed, and it would also have averted much anxiety from both of us. But Providence has now guided you here to receive again the guardianship of my daughter, to whom you have acted more like a father than an uncle."

He laboured for breath as he spoke : it was evident, indeed, that his strength was rapidly failing : he, however, after a few minutes' pause, continued—

“ I have only known enough of her to appreciate justly her value. She has a tender and a dutiful heart ; her gratitude to you is unbounded. If—” he panted as he exerted himself to speak—“ if chance should throw her much-injured mother in your way”—here his voice faltered, and a shudder passed over his whole frame—“ tell her that my dying hour was one of deep repentance—and—that it held forth the faint hope of her forgiveness.”

The Béguine, who had drawn her coif close around her face when Colonel Standard entered the room, and who was listening with the most intense interest to the few sentences which Atkinson had just concluded, became hysterically agitated. Throwing off her veil—

“ I can no longer——” she exclaimed ;—“ hear — hear that forgiveness — pronounced from my own lips—I forgive you, Richard !—my heart is still yours—it has never swerved from that affection which first made it yours.”

As she spoke, the dying man seemed to acquire new life and strength : he raised himself in bed—shrouded his eyes, which were start-

ing from their sockets, with his hand, as if to aid his recognition of the face of the being who thus addressed him. For a moment, they sparkled with a preternatural brilliancy ;—he stretched out his arms—he struggled for utterance : it was in vain ;—he tossed about in fruitless anguish—at length, Nature, exhausted with the effort, gave way—a choking sound gurgled in his throat—then came the hissing of the last respiratory effort—a convulsive struggle followed—his features were horribly distorted—and he sunk back lifeless upon the pillow. The piercing shriek which the Béguine uttered cannot be described. With her eyes riveted upon the features of the dead man, she stood for a few moments petrified ; and then, as if struck with lightning, fell upon the bosom of the corpse.

The paralysing influence of the unexpected discovery of her mother in the person of the Béguine, added to the shock of the immediate death of her father, proved almost fatal to the delicate frame of Miss Atkinson. Her knees gave way under her, and she would have sunk upon the floor, had she not been supported by Mr. Mordaunt, who, raising her in his arms, conveyed her into the adjoining room. I followed him ; and, after giving some directions

for her recovery and comfort, returned again to the apartment of the dead.

The scene presented a moral and religious lesson never to be forgotten. The Béguine still lay, in the same cataleptic state, across the lifeless body of her husband—the mortal and now senseless tenement of a noble spirit. How shall we speak of it?—Whence had it fled?

As a soldier, Atkinson had displayed the most exalted virtues—valiant, firm, honorable, humane: but as a man, both his religion and his morality were defective. Had it been otherwise, he might have been refreshed by hope; and, if not blameless, he might at least have been cheered by the consciousness of rectitude of intention, at the awful moment which had just elapsed. Alas! on the contrary, tainted by the depravities of the world, he had departed overwhelmed with humiliation, mortification, and despair. But, *Requiescat in pace!* We know that we shall all be summoned, at the twinkling of an eye, to the last tribunal: there, to him as well as to ourselves, whilst the sentence will be rigidly just, we believe that it will also be tempered with mercy.

The Editor has to state that his friend had not attempted to describe the meeting of the sisters, nor that of the mother and daughter. His Diary contains the history of the Béguine, which may some day be laid before the world. In a subsequent part of his Diary, the Editor finds the following paragraph.

“ I arrived this evening at Lonsdale Rectory. The worthy Rector saw me trotting up the avenue, and came himself to the door to welcome me. On entering the drawing room, I was delighted to see so many of my old friends. The Veteran, lounging in an arm chair, was teaching the manual exercise to a curly-headed urchin about three years old, who was standing between his knees, shouldering a cane ; Mrs. Standard and Mrs. Atkinson were seated on the sofa, the latter in her widow's garb, still looking like the Béguine, although no longer bigoted to that faith to which she had fled for consolation in her domestic affliction. She was conversing with Aunt Bridget, whose identical fan was still flirted in the old way ; whilst Miss Standard was performing the duties of the tea table. Mrs. Mordaunt, as lovely as ever, met me at the door ; and the salutations of all came directly from the heart.

“ ‘ Have you heard any thing of your friend Cameron ?’ said the Veteran.

“ ‘ I had a note from him the day on which I left home,” said I, “ announcing his arrival in Perthshire, with his wife and his brother-in-law.’

“ ‘ And have you seen,’ said Aunt Bridget, ‘ my admirer, the Advocate ?’

“ ‘ I dined with him, at Oatlands,’ replied I, ‘ a week since ; and met there the Artist and the Cantab. I never passed a more delightful day : our landlord was in high spirits ; his bosom overflowing with philanthropy. He is projecting what he calls a jubilee, which is to bring us all together among the hills for a week.’

“ ‘ What does the dear man propose to do ?’ said Aunt Bridget.

“ ‘ Why, Biddy ! it is a scheme,’ replied the Veteran, ‘ to grind old ladies young again ! ’ ”

THE END.







